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**Broadening Understandings of Governance:  
The Case of Mexican Local Government**

by

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## Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work of research. All the material included in this thesis is the result of new research, except the interview material of notes 4, 6, and 16 of chapter two, and note 65 of chapter three. The material used in these four footnotes was previously included in my Master’s degree dissertation. They offer supportive evidence to the argument and are not a substantial part of this research. I also confirm that this dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at another University.

F. J. Porras Sánchez.



## Summary

This dissertation is an evaluation of some of the basic assumptions of the literature on governance and their utility for understanding a specific case – that of Mexico. It argues that Mexican municipalities, like their counterparts in Europe and the United States, have experienced a change towards a way of policy-making based on broader policy-networks, fragmentation in governmental and societal bodies, participation of an increasing number of self-organised actors, and the resulting blurring boundaries between the public and private spheres. Mexican urban municipalities are evolving from traditional patterns of governmental interventions to dynamisms of local governance. This shift, however, has taken place in an uneven way, shaped by factors such as the complexity of urban problems, the political alternation, the federal policies on transfers, the different policy areas and issues, the looseness of networks and the way in which they operate. As a result, Mexican local governance has been developed in policy sectors that have a high legitimising potential or that are in great need for citizens' resources. This has generated a picture of 'patches', where stronger policy networks and citizens' involvement in policy-making coexist with traditional governmental mechanisms.

The dissertation is a contribution to the differentiated accounts of local governance recently developed, which use diverse contexts to argue that there is not a 'one size fits all' form of governance. It is a reconsideration of the importance of local contexts in shaping policy-making through networks, as opposed to the initial context-free governance understandings. The conclusion recognises the relevance of the main arguments of governance literature. The thesis makes use of empirical evidence gathered in three urban municipalities. It employs qualitative methodological criteria, discussed in the methodological appendix. The main research techniques used were elite interviewing and documental analysis.



## List of acronyms and Spanish terms used

AMMAC	The Association of Mexican Municipalities [Asociación de Municipios de México, AC]
AOP	Annual Operative Plan [Plan Operativo Annual]
<i>Aportaciones</i>	Branch 33 Funds
<i>Cabildo</i>	City Council (when in plenary session)
<i>Camarilla</i>	Informal political group
CANACINTRA	National Chamber of the Industry of the Secondary Sector [Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación]
CANACO	National Chamber of Commerce and Services [Cámara Nacional de Comercio y Servicios]. León's local office
CANACO - SERVYTUR	National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Tourism [Cámara Nacional de Comercio y Servicios Turísticos]. Orizaba's local office
CANAZAC	National Chamber of Commerce [Cámara Nacional de Comercio]. Zacatecas local office
CC	Citizens' Council
CDC	Committee of Farmers' Defence [Comité de Defensa Campesina]
CDP	Committee of the People's Defence of Zaragoza [Comité de Defensa Popular de Zaragoza]
CESEM	Heriberto Jara Centre of Municipal Services [Centro de Servicios Municipales Heriberto Jara AC]
CIDE	Centre for Economic Research and Teaching [ Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas]
CIMA	Inter-Municipal Council of Environmentalists [Consejo Inter-municipal de Ambientalistas]

CNDH	National Commission of Human Rights [Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos]
CODEMUN	Council of Municipal Development [Consejo de Desarrollo Municipal]
COFIPE	Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures [Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales]
CONCANACO - SERVYTUR	Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce, Services, and Tourism [Confederación de Cámaras Nacionales de Comercio, Servicios y Turismo]
COPARMEX	Employers' Confederation of the Mexican Republic [Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana]
COPLADEM	Planning Council for Municipal Development [Consejo de Planeación del Desarrollo Municipal]
CoS	Committees of Solidarity
CPW	Committee of Public Works
CROC	Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants [Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos]
CROM	Revolutionary Confederation of Mexican Workers [Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros Mexicanos]
CTM	Confederation of Mexican Workers [Confederación de Trabajadores de México]
<i>Delegaciones</i>	Local government of the federal district (Mexico City)
DIF	Department for Family Assistance [Desarrollo Integral de la Familia]
DSD	Department of Social Development (municipal body)
<i>Entidad Federativa</i>	Federal entity. It refers to both the 31 states or the federal district
FAEB	Fund for Basic Education and Teachers' Training [Fondo de Aportaciones para la Educación Básica y Normal]
FAETA	Fund for Technology and Education for Adults [Fondo de Aportaciones para la Educación Tecnológica y de los

	Adultos]
FAIS	Fund for Social Infrastructure (“fund III”) [Fondo de Aportaciones para la Infraestructura Social]
FAM	Fund for Multiple Contributions [Fondo de Aportaciones Múltiples]
FASP	Fund for Public Safety [Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública de los Estados]
FASSA	Fund for Health Services [Fondo de Aportaciones para los Servicios de Salud]
FIDOC	Trust for Public Works by Co-operation [Fondo de Inversión de Obras por Co-operación] (León)
FORTAMUN	Fund for the Strengthening of Municipalities (“fund IV”) [Fondo de Aportaciones para el Fortalecimiento de los Municipios]
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IFE	Federal Electoral Institute [Instituto Federal Electoral]
IGR	Inter Governmental Relations
IMPLAN	Institute for Municipal Planning of León [Instituto Municipal de Planeación]
IMSS	Social Security Institute [Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social]
INAFED	National Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development [Instituto Nacional para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal]
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics [Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática]
INFONAVIT	Institute of the National Fund for the Workers’ Housing [Instituto del Fondo Nacional para la Vivienda de los Trabajadores]
LFC	Law of Fiscal Co-ordination



MDP	Municipal Development Plan [Plan de Desarrollo Municipal]
NC	Neighbourhood Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPM	New Public Management
OML	Organisational Municipal Law [Ley Orgánica Municipal]
PAN	National Action Party [Partido Acción Nacional]
PARM	The Authentic Mexican Revolution Party [Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana]
<i>Participaciones</i>	Branch 28 funds
PFCRN	The Party of the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction [Partido del Frente Cardenista de Reconstrucción Nacional]
PNR	National Revolutionary Party [Partido Nacional Revolucionario] (Precursor of the PRI, 1929 – 1938)
PPS	The Socialist People's Party [Partido Popular Socialista]
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution [Partido de la Revolución Democrática]
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party [Partido Revolucionario Institucional]
PRM	Party of the Mexican Revolution [Partido de la Revolución Mexicana] (Precursor of the PRI, 1938 – 1946)
PRONASOL	National Programme of Solidarity [Programa Nacional de Solidaridad] also called Solidaridad
PT	Labour Party [Partido del Trabajo]
PVEM	The Green-Ecologist Party of Mexico [Partido Verde Ecologista de México]
<i>Regidor</i>	“Alderman”
SEDESOL	Secretariat of Social Development [Secretaría de Desarrollo Social]

<i>Síndico</i>	“Trustee”. Municipality’s legal representative
SIT	Integral System of Public Transport [Sistema integral de Transporte de León]
UCZ	Zapatista Union of Farmers [Unión Campesina Zapatista]



## Introduction

From the perspective of a politics researcher who is not a native English speaker, one of the most intriguing theoretical concepts recently developed by the Anglo-British academic literature is that of ‘governance’. Part of its appeal lies in the fact that, in spite of having the same etymological origin of ‘government’, it means something different and even, in occasions, something opposite to it. ‘Governance’ has many understandings, but all of them distinguish between ‘governance’ and traditional ‘government’. This conceptual difference, which does not seem easily translatable to the Mexican context, can trigger basic questions related to the fundamental nature of government and governance. For example, what is ‘governance’ if it is not ‘government’? To what extent the conceptual difference between government and governance depicts real differences in the socio-political order? Can we really differentiate between government and governance? Is this distinction useful to understand Mexican local politics? If this is so, is Mexico a case of government or of governance?

These questions are important given that, in the last two decades, local governments in Mexico have gone through a rapid process of change. During the first half of the 1980s, local public services were devolved to them; in the mid 1990s, the political alternation in City Councils gained pace, and local politics began to be changed by innovative approaches to urban problems and citizens’ participation. For the first time in decades, some Mexican municipalities began to be influential in national politics and mayoralties consolidated as good positions to start a political career. New solutions to the deficiencies in public services were implemented, and more or less

comprehensive models of government, designed in opposition administrations, began to be shared among same-party municipalities using networks that circumvented state governors. Mexican local government in the 1990s looked like a political laboratory where different approaches and governmental projects were implemented. Consequently, some aspects of the traditional government-society relations changed significantly.

As the research progressed, it became apparent that the governance literature could provide some theoretical and empirical contributions useful to understand, or even explain, the changes occurring in Mexican municipalities. In the end, this dissertation is the result of trying to analyse the emerging patterns of government-society interactions in Mexican municipalities using governance understandings.

### **The theme of this dissertation**

In recent years, the salience of the concept of governance has increased in political studies and in public administration and management. The term has been adopted by the most diverse academic disciplines, making it one of the most widely used umbrella-terms in the social sciences. *Governance* is employed in multiple senses; its several understandings vary in focus, theoretical and contextual backgrounds, and levels of analysis. It has been defined as a social-political order that is the result of increased interdependencies between governmental and societal actors (Kooiman, 1993), as the set of policies resulting from the 'retreat of the state' in particular policy sectors (Strange, 1996), as a process of adaptation of the state to conditions of increased complexity (Pierre and Peters, 2000), and as the shift to a paradigm of



policy-making and implementation based on inter-organizational and other kind of networks (John, 2001; Rhodes, 1997). These different definitions of governance emphasise diverse variables to understand emergent social-political trends. However, they have in common the redefinition of governmental and societal roles in environments with high levels of fragmentation. Fragmentation, as it is explained in chapter three, can be understood as the proliferation of more autonomous governmental agencies or, in some cases, public-private bodies.

In both theoretical and empirical terms, 'governance' describes something different from what is known as 'government'. Governance understandings propose that these two concepts imply different methods of steering non-governmental actors and achieving acceptance of policy. In addition, most contributions to the governance literature assume overall qualitative differences between government and governance. 'Government' is characterised by a relatively small number of institutions working in consolidated and hierarchical bureaucracies, which produces an approach based on direct control and centralised decision-making (John, 2001). 'Governance', on the other hand, describes a governing situation where decision-making institutions are numerous, and the political system is decentred and fragmented (ibid.). This causes dynamisms of 'power dependence' and 'blurring boundaries' between the public and private spheres of action (Stoker, 1998).

Regardless of their differences, contributions to governance literature assume that in western industrialised countries there has been a 'shift' from government to governance. This has been especially evident at local level, where the move to a policy-making paradigm based on networks has generated a change in traditional

state-society patterns of interaction, as well as concerns about lack of accountability in new forms of public-private collaboration (John, 2001).

The different governance understandings presuppose diverse degrees in which paradigms of government and governance are compatible. Kooiman (1993) argues that societal direction, in the form of decision-making loci dispersed among governmental and non-governmental institutions, is a cause, among many, of governance. Rosenau and Czempiel (1992), and to some extent Rhodes (1995, 1997), assume that government and governance are qualitatively different political orders. On the other hand, John (2001), Krahmann (2003), and Pierre and Peters (2000) argue that it is not possible to establish a sharp dichotomy between government and governance, but that all political systems are in some way a mixture of both. Finally, authors like Bevir and Rhodes (2003), Cole and John (2001), John (2001), and Le Gales (2002) argue that the role of government in governance varies according to national and local contexts, thus pointing at the imperative need to conduct comparative research and case studies in contexts other than those of western industrialised countries.

The dissertation makes use of these cumulative theoretical propositions of the governance literature. This thesis assumes that government and governance indicate different patterns of state-society interaction. Empirical evidence collected in western industrialised countries and Mexico, however, shows that these patterns of interaction are not present in all policy sectors in the same way. As John (2001) and Pierre and Peters (2000) argue, the shift from government to governance usually takes place in a differentiated way, with policy sectors that display fragmentation,



interdependence among governmental and non-governmental actors, and networks' involvement in policy-making in varying degrees. What is more, Krahmann (2003) proposes the possibility of finding political systems with contradictory trends, with some policy areas that function in traditional governmental ways and others where governance is present. The variations can be explained by contextual variables, as the works of Bevir and Rhodes (2003), Cole and John (2001), and John (2001) suggest.

This general theoretical framework allows us to have sophisticated accounts of local governance, based on a differentiated treatment by policy area and context. Moreover, these recent local governance understandings, by being attentive to national and local contexts, permit a more productive comparison between the assumptions of governance literature and non-European countries. This is important, for the purpose of comparing governance understandings and other political systems is not just to verify or dismiss fixed theoretical propositions, but to broaden governance understandings by detecting different patterns and arrangements of governance that, nevertheless, are part of similar social-political trends in many countries.

The point is relevant because the topic of this dissertation is local governance in Mexico. This subject brings together two bodies of literature that have become more important in their respective academic environments: local governance literature and the literature on innovation in Mexican municipalities.

The local governance literature, especially what Marinetto (2003: 597) calls the "Anglo governance school", is an obligatory theoretical reference to understand



changes in sub-national politics. Its idea of conceptualising processes of increased fragmentation, and their new patterns of government-society interaction, as something qualitatively different to government is very innovative. It is possible that, from a non-English speaking perspective, the most evident expression of this innovation is assigning a different word to name this qualitative change (i.e. 'governance'). In Mexican Spanish, for example, there is not an equivalent word to 'governance' used by academia to designate a different paradigm of policy-making or a new set of interrelations between state and society. Aguilar (2002, 2002a) has made some attempts to introduce the concept into the debates on Mexican local governments, but the fact that his chosen words ('gobernación' and 'gobernancia') belong to archaic Spanish, having very specific meanings already, has been an obstacle to popularise them among Mexican scholars.

At the same time, the shift from government to governance in Mexican municipalities has taken place in an uneven and highly varied way, as the evidence collected by Cabrero-Mendoza (2002, 2003), Guillén-López (1996, 1998), and Ziccardi (1995, 1995a) suggest. The great diversity in basic socio-political, economic, and even geographical conditions present in Mexican municipalities has shaped the rapid changes taking place in local management and policy-making, producing a great variety of governance outcomes. For the same reason, Mexican literature usually avoids using a single concept to describe the different municipalities' conditions. 'Governance' is not easily translatable to the Mexican context, for although a certain shift to policy-making and implementation based on networks (John, 2001) has taken place in the country, it is not present in all municipalities, or in all policy sectors.

Having said that, it is important to note that the typical subjects and concerns of the governance literature have been present in Mexican academia for the last two decades, albeit without a unifying theoretical umbrella-term similar to ‘governance’. The 1983 constitutional amendment that expanded municipal legal capacities, making local governments responsible for public service provision, renovated the academic interest in this level of government. Research centres like El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, El Colegio Mexiquense, the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and especially the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) have become the hubs of the study of Mexican municipalities in the country. At the same time, governmental and non-governmental think-tanks like the Instituto Nacional para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal (INAFED, formerly Centro de Desarrollo Municipal – CEDEMUN), the Asociación de Municipios de México A. C. (AMMAC), and the Centro de Servicios Municipales ‘Heriberto Jara’ A. C. (CESEM) have also secured a place of influence in the way municipalities are studied. Among the research products of these centres, this dissertation has benefited from the contributions that consider municipal potential for innovation in the middle of more complex economic and political environments.

Contributions of these research centres and think-tanks have emphasised the capacities of local governments to modify the usual government-society patterns of interaction, within traditional legal frameworks. In their search for increasing acceptance of policy, some Mexican local governments have opened up policy-making processes, augmenting direct mayor-to-citizen interaction, and establishing new network-based instruments, like municipal ‘parliaments’, neighbourhood and



policy-sector committees, public-private advisory bodies, and even concessions of public service provision to private firms. However, the Constitutional legal framework has remained basically the same, which has not facilitated the formation of more stable Public Private Partnerships, or the acquisition of substantial alternative sources of funding. As an interviewee put it, the problem of Mexican municipality is how to respond to the increasing citizens' demands with basically the same traditional structure: how to "make more with the same"<sup>1</sup>.

The coexistence of traditional government with new government-society dynamisms is, in part, the result of the evolution of the Mexican political system. The Mexican political system has been traditionally regarded as a hybrid, with characteristics of both an electoral democracy and an authoritarian regime (cf. Camp, 1996). Nevertheless, the alternation of different political parties in office, which began in local governments, has introduced processes of redefinition of its traditional traits. This dissertation assumes that governance understandings can bring in analytical categories helpful to deal with emergent trends in Mexican local governments. The aim of this thesis is to analyse some patterns of local governance in Mexico using the theoretical propositions of governance literature.

### **Research questions and hypotheses**

The research questions of the dissertation are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Escudero–Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

1. What are the founding conceptual and empirical assumptions of contemporary debates about governance?
2. What do contemporary modes and patterns of local governance in Mexico look like?
3. How useful are the resulting governance frameworks for understanding modes and patterns of governance in Mexico and how valid are they when applied to the Mexican political system?

The first question addresses the theoretical assumptions that support governance understandings. Answering it requires the identification of the basic traits of governance as a different paradigm of policy-making and implementation. The second question deals mostly with the empirical analysis of the socio-political context. Mapping the contemporary patterns of local governance in Mexico is a precondition to the assessment of theory and constitutes one of the dissertation's claims of originality. To my knowledge, it is the first time that it has been done in such detail in order to compare the resulting picture with governance understandings. In this sense, this dissertation is a contribution to the case studies that are needed in order to assess the theoretical potential of governance frameworks (cf. Bevir, Rhodes, and Weller, 2003a; and Pierre and Peters, 2000). Finally, the third research question assumes that comparison between governance understandings and Mexican municipalities is possible and, therefore, that they are potentially useful theoretical tools. The research, however, is not a comparative study between the western industrialised countries where governance literature has been generated and the Mexican case. The dissertation uses the main propositions of governance literature as a general theoretical framework in order to analyse three Mexican municipalities,



which are considered representative of emergent trends. Therefore, the conclusions concern primarily the Mexican case, although they have wider potential relevance for governance literature.

Three assumptions have guided the research process, corresponding to each research question:

*(A) The different governance understandings have common theoretical elements.* The dissertation draws its theoretical framework not only from local governance literature, but also from wider governance understandings. Despite the different definitions, theoretical backgrounds, and levels of analysis, this dissertation argues that governance understandings share concerns about the change in patterns of interaction between social-political actors, and the role of government in more complex environments. Arguing that there are commonalities among the different governance understandings does not imply that governance always shows itself in the same way, regardless of context, or level of analysis. The dissertation presupposes that there are general qualities that differentiate governance from government, and that they have been identified by most governance frameworks. These general qualities constitute the theoretical framework of this dissertation.

*(B) Local governance patterns in the studied municipalities differ according to contextual variables.*

One of the main reasons to consider wider understandings of governance, and not only local governance ones, is to show that there has been an evolution from a quasi context-free treatment of governance to understandings that offer differentiated accounts according to national and local contexts (cf. Cole and John, 2001; John,



2001; and Le Gales, 2002). The research was conducted assuming that there are differences between the Mexican context and that of western industrialised countries, and among the Mexican municipalities studied in this thesis. These differences, in their turn, produce diverse local governance patterns (Cole and John, 2001). The dissertation offers, as a conclusion, a set of variables related to the national and local contexts that are useful to understand variations in governance.

*(C) Governance understandings are useful to analyse the Mexican case.* If the reconsideration of the importance of context in governance literature is taken seriously, this dissertation cannot be a simple comparison of theoretical propositions with the Mexican case in order to confirm or refute hypotheses. Rather, it implies the depiction and analysis of Mexican local governance patterns *per se*, with the intention of extracting the corresponding implications upon governance literature. In this sense, the dissertation's aim is to broaden governance understandings by identifying patterns of local governance that, despite not being on the same scale as those found in western industrialised countries, belong to similar trends of change. The dissertation assumes that governance literature has identified crucial problems in the redefinition of the government-society interactions, which are also present in Mexican municipalities. It argues that there are governance dynamisms in Mexican urban local governments, albeit not in all municipalities or all policy sectors. By analysing three cases of study from the theoretical perspective of governance understandings, I acknowledge their value.

## **Main argument and contribution**

The main argument of this dissertation is that in Mexican municipalities, the shift from government to governance has taken place in a limited and uneven way; a phenomenon that is contingent upon contextual factors, such as the bureaucratic structure of Mexican local government, the different policy areas, the diverse policy networks, and the political party in office. The dissertation argues this primarily for the three case studies, but it also maintains that the governance patterns found in these Mexican municipalities are part of widespread trends in the country.

In general, this dissertation treats governance as a “flexible pattern of public decision-making, based on loose networks of individuals” (John, 2001: 9). Defined like this, the distinctive shift from government to governance argued by the literature in Britain and other places, has taken place in Mexico in a partial way. As Cabrero-Mendoza (2003a) argues, Mexican local governments traditionally put emphasis on improving coverage of public services, mainly through increasing amounts of federal transfers, and they decide about policy in traditional ways, either by following administrative or operative criteria defined by local officials, or by the compliance with instructions issued by the federal or state governments. Evidence suggests that systematic policy-making and implementation based on inter-organizational or policy networks has emerged in municipalities with certain conditions, among which we can count being urban or semi-urban, to have the real possibility to experience partisan alternation in office, or the development of strong community relationships (cf. Cabrero-Mendoza, 2002). None of these trends is a generalised occurrence in the



country. Mexican municipalities are usually described as being “between tradition and change” (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2003a: 27).

In any case, the case studies show a partial use of networks in policy-making and implementation, especially in the provision of public services. The introduction of devices such as the direct mayor-to-citizen exchanges, neighbourhood and thematic citizens’ committees, and citizens’ advisory bodies with the legal power to decide priorities in the use of federal transfers, implies a qualitative change in the usual government-society interactions. However, the scope of the decisions of these citizens’ bodies is limited to some public services, and local officials are still able to influence them through informal channels. In the three case studies, for example, it is usual that only non-governmental members of citizens’ planning councils have voice and vote rights. Nevertheless, local officials and technical experts are still able to shape citizens’ councils decisions using their political and technical prestige to meet with other members informally, as it is mentioned in the following chapters. The three case studies show similar patterns to those identified by Cole and John (2001) in England and France, where local officials were not able to direct policy-making processes as before, but still possessed power to influence policy networks.

The dissertation argues that in Mexico there has been a limited shift to the use of network-based arrangements in policy-making, accompanied by increased fragmentation of bureaucratic structures, and certain blurredness between the public and societal traditional spheres of action. In this sense, the studied municipalities qualify as cases of ‘governance’, as opposed to traditional ‘government’, because the typical patterns of government-society interaction have begun to change. If, on the

other hand, governance is understood as a *specific* modality of interaction, then Mexico cannot be considered a comprehensive case of governance. In this particular point, it is important to note that Mexican local governance is not characterised by strong inter-organizational networks with the capacity to override the state's steering and coordination capacities (cf. Rhodes, 1997). In Mexican-style local governance, there is an increased dispersion of power among governmental and societal decision-making loci. Government depends on a greater number of actors than in the past, and some of the necessary resources to provide public services are sought in the social sector and the markets. Nevertheless, government has been able to use fragmentation, blurredness, and increased self-organisation to its advantage, to the point that it is the 'hinge' of policy and inter-organizational networks in the three case studies.

The 'patchy' picture of Mexican local governance suggest that, at least in the case studies, the move towards governance has been steered by local governments in order to adapt to complexity and lack of legitimacy and resources, as Pierre and Peters (2000) argue. It also points to the possibility that there could be policy sectors more compatible with governance dynamisms than others (the fiscal and financial municipal policies, for example, are areas in which it would be difficult to have citizens' or public-private bodies). The most interesting of these possible implications over governance literature is that the Mexican case, with its 'patches' of government and governance, could be better described by the image of the overlapping areas of influence, rather than by the 'shift' to governance.



The originality of the thesis rests on two points. In the first place, to the best of my knowledge, it is the first time that governance theoretical propositions are used in a substantial way to analyse the Mexican case. This fills up two important gaps in the literatures on governance and Mexican municipalities. Governance understandings are the product of western industrialised countries, and comparing their theoretical propositions with other contexts is useful to evaluate their validity. On the other hand, literature on Mexican municipalities is abundant in case studies that focus on the increased importance of local governments as loci of decision-making, on citizens' involvement in policy-making and implementation, and on the innovations implemented to tackle new policy challenges (García del Castillo, 2004a), but it is scanty in theoretical proposals to systematize the wealth of empirical research. Governance literature could provide a broad theoretical reference to assess the diversity of local governance patterns in Mexico.

In the second place, this dissertation is innovative because it offers an analysis of three concrete Mexican municipalities that have used the rhetoric of citizen participation in policy-making. The thesis analyses the scope of the move to governance in León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas. León has been present in academic literature for more than a decade, but this dissertation is the first approach to Orizaba and Zacatecas from the governance literature standpoint.

### **The selected case studies**

From the start of the research, it was decided that the most appropriate unit of analysis was the municipality itself. This category, considered from the governance

literature perspective, includes not only the bureaucratic governmental structures but also the municipal sphere of influence. The unit of analysis comprises the public and private actors that are relevant to shape governance patterns. The case study modality is especially useful in circumstances like these, where it is difficult to draw clear distinctions between various inputs and their respective significance (Yin, 1994).

Following the criteria of Bernard (2000), I chose municipalities that had a potential to illustrate variations within general governance trends and to which I had access, in both primary documental sources and possible interviewees. The selected cases were the municipalities of León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas city. They have in common some characteristics that make comparison among them easier:

(1) They have similar, although not identical, indicators of quality of life. León is a metropolitan municipality with a relevant place in the economy and politics of the *Bajío* region. It has a territory of 1,183.20 square kilometres, and a population of 1,134,842 inhabitants (2000). The municipality has a very low percentage of indigenous population (0.21 per cent) and a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.798. In 2000, its adjusted Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was 7,080 USD (INAFED, 2004). Orizaba, on the other hand, has the smallest territory of the three cases, but as León, it has a considerable economic and political relevance in the region of the Gulf of Mexico. In 2000, it had 118,593 inhabitants, with 2.34 per cent of them belonging to local indigenous peoples. Its HDI for 2000 was 0.823 and, in the same year, its adjusted GDP per capita was 7,075 USD (ibid.). Finally, Zacatecas is the capital city of the state of Zacatecas, and it has a place of importance in the North-Central region of the country. It has a territory of 719.60 square kilometres,



and a population of 123,899 inhabitants in 2000, of which, 0.22 per cent was indigenous population. Its HDI for 2000 was 0.821, and its adjusted GDP per capita was 7,131 USD (ibid.). Indicators of quality of life are similar; but their difference in size is relevant: while Orizaba and Zacatecas have comparable populations, León is almost ten times bigger. Governance patterns differ following these lines, for in many aspects, solutions implemented by Orizaba and Zacatecas are more similar than those applied by León, a metropolitan municipality. Other factors, described below, were determinant in the final decision of incorporating this latter municipality into the case studies.

(2) The case studies are considered referential models for their respective political parties. León has been governed by the National Action Party (PAN) since 1989, and is regarded by interviewed politicians as an innovative municipality at national level (it was one of the first to put into practice programmes such as the *Citizens' Day*, the citizens' planning councils and an autonomous planning centre). These programmes gained León a national reputation that is indicated in constant allusions from local and national officials and academic literature (e.g. Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996: 53–120 dedicates an extensive chapter to the 1989–1991 administration; in Cabrero-Mendoza, 1998 he analyses some aspects of the following periods; Ward 1998, and 1998a uses this municipality as an example of technocratic tendencies in his typology). Informally, it is regarded as the municipal 'flagship' of the PAN, among other reasons, because their officials have been originators of policies that are used in most PANista municipalities. In addition, many politicians of León were members of the state cabinet when Mr. Vicente Fox was the governor of Guanajuato, and followed him once he was elected president, including Dr. Gadsden, the former



director of the INAFED. The dissertation analyses primarily the administration from October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000, to October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

Orizaba, on the other hand, has been governed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) since the party was founded, except in three administrations (1995-1997, 1998-2000, and 2005-2007). The studied government (1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2001, to 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2004), a “New PRI” administration, has maintained some of the changes introduced by the PAN in the 1995–2000 period but has also developed a particular style of government that combines New Public Management (NPM) policies with traditional clientelism. As it is explained in the following chapters, NPM in general is characterised by the pre-eminence of management over politics, the appraisal of efficiency in administration, the atomisation of governmental agencies, the emphasis on outputs, targets, and monetary incentives for bureaucrats, and a public service delivery with an user-pay basis (Bevir, Rhodes, and Weller, 2003). PRI politicians consider the 2001-2004 administration of Orizaba as a model for the central region of the state of Veracruz, for it was one of the few important municipalities that were regained by this party in the year 2000 elections.

Finally, Zacatecas city has been the only state capital, with regional relevance, that has been governed by the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in two consecutive periods from 1998 onwards. Although PRD slates have been elected subsequently in other state capitals like Colima, Tepic, and Xalapa (PRD, 2000), Zacatecas city has remained a reference to politicians because its City Council has introduced innovative regulations that enable citizens’ councils to produce binding decisions on public services. In addition, the state constitution is one of the few in

the country that considers explicitly the participation in public–private planning bodies. The thesis focuses primarily on the administration from 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1998 to 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2001, although some references are made to the 2001-2004 one.

(3) In spite that the case studies are municipalities with different social-political conditions, they have developed similar approaches to their respective urban problems. It appears that the capacity to innovate in issues related to management and citizens' participation in Mexican municipalities is linked to the urban status. Medium size and large urban municipalities have more human and economic resources to implement governance-like policies (cf. Cabrero-Mendoza, García del Castillo, García-Vázquez, and Gómez-Castro, 2001). Fragmenting the bureaucratic structures or maintaining the engagement with semi-autonomous networks is expensive, and rural municipalities do not usually have enough income to allow free resources to fund new programmes. León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas have renovated their governmental structure and maintain expensive participatory systems that are not present in smaller municipalities.

(4) The three municipalities keep records, albeit not always complete or sufficiently disaggregated, on the public works they carry out and on their finances. They publish them on a yearly basis and, in the case of León, every month through its webpage. Finally, I had access to potential interviewees in the three cases.



## **Outline of the dissertation**

In order to develop its argument, the dissertation is divided in introductory and core chapters. Chapters one and two are introductory, and the rest are the central part of the thesis.

Chapter one argues that governance understandings have commonalities that allow us to establish the basic characteristics of governance as a different paradigm of policy-making from government. In order to do that, I propose a classification of contributions to governance literature based on the role that they assign to government and context. The chapter shows how, following roughly a chronological sequence, governance understandings have moved from being basically context-free, paying attention to the essential qualities that differentiate governance from government, to the reassessment of government and local contexts as important factors in governance. This literature review also argues that governance understandings have in common the consideration of governmental and societal fragmentation, the blurredness between the public and private spheres that results from citizens' involvement in policy-making, and the increased self-organisation among non-governmental actors. These qualities (fragmentation, 'blurredness', and self-organisation) are considered the basic traits of governance.

Chapter two is a brief description of the limited and uneven shift from government to governance that has been mentioned in this introductory chapter. It identifies the areas where the emergent trends of governance dynamics have been more evident.



Chapters three, four, and five are an analysis of the basic traits of governance in the three case studies. Chapter three argues that fragmentation, defined as the proliferation of governmental agencies and the introduction of public-private bodies, is present in the three studied municipalities in different degrees. What is common in the three cases is that fragmentation has been used by mayors to strengthen their leadership and political position. Bureaucratic structure is especially important in this case, for it appears that the mayors of Orizaba and Zacatecas, having a less fragmented municipal structure, display more traditional governing styles than the mayor of León, where citizens' councils and municipal departments are more numerous.

Chapter four analyses 'blurredness'. It argues that in the studied cases, the use of inter-organizational networks in the form of neighbourhood committees and citizens' councils, seeks to increase the acceptance of policy and find an alternative supply of resources. The research found that the studied municipalities establish and suppress networks with different approaches, being Zacatecas the most community-minded, while Orizaba and León were more concerned in obtaining resources for the introduction of public services in poor neighbourhoods. This behaviour is consistent with the general policy orientation of the three political parties at national level. Additionally, in the three cases local officials were able to influence decisions of citizens' bodies, confirming the role of government as the key node within policy networks.

Chapter five focuses on self-organisation among non-governmental actors. It argues that, regardless of the increased autonomy from governmental scrutiny, non-

governmental networks in the three cases are able to coincide and collaborate with governmental policies, especially in some policy areas. The differences can also be traced back to the political party in office.

Finally, the conclusions argue the implications that the findings have on the classical understandings of Mexican local government and governance literature.

# Chapter One

## Charting understandings of governance

### Introduction

It is already a truism to state that ‘governance’ is an ‘umbrella term’ that has multiple understandings. The different theoretical backgrounds, academic disciplines, originating contexts, and levels of analysis that are involved in the contemporary debates about governance have generated dissimilar, and often contradictory, understandings of it. In one and a half decades, governance literature has produced a substantial number of contributions in most of the sub-fields of politics, economics, sociology, and public management ranging from more or less comprehensive explanations of change in state-society interactions, to very specific proposals for innovation in policy-making processes

In spite of this ‘Babylonian multiplicity’ of understandings (Börzel, 1998), there has been a constant effort to explore the theoretical potential of governance, going beyond the consideration of it as a simple metaphor of change in the social-political environment. Contributions considered in this literature review treat governance as a theoretical tool, using it as a framework of analysis through which new interdependencies, institutions, and actors are incorporated into the explanations of public policy outcomes. Contributions that treat governance as an analytical tool usually begin by pointing out that western industrialised countries have experienced a rise in societal and political fragmentation, in blurredness between the public and private spheres, and in the autonomy and resources of policy networks. Policy networks can be defined as the “ties” that exist between the “bodies relevant to a



policy area” (Jordan, 1990: 333) or among the decision makers and the persons or institutions affected or benefited by their decisions, as it is explained in chapter four.

The governance literature argues that this state of affairs is different to the patterns of interaction that are present when government is the centre of social-political life, and hierarchical command is its preferred mode of intervention. Authors considered in this chapter have tried to determine to what extent the new patterns of social-political interaction, emerging in the midst of more fragmentation, blurredness, and self-organisation, constitute a qualitatively different political system or policy-making modality. At the same time, the literature has dealt with the question of how compatible are the new patterns of interaction, grouped under the generic name of ‘governance’, with the traditional institutions of government.

These considerations have been carried out at, mainly, three levels of analysis: national and sub-national, regional, and global (Krahmann, 2003). In this literature review, I presuppose that the theoretical contributions of the literature on governance have some elements that are common among the different levels of analysis. The concern with political institutions in fragmented environments, the problems of legitimacy and accountability when private actors enter the policy-making processes, the redefinition of the roles of state and society, and the problems to achieve consensus when a strong political authority is absent, are recurring themes in governance frameworks developed for national and sub-national, regional, and global levels.

This is a thesis on local governance and, therefore, its theoretical framework is drawn mainly from governance literature written for the sub-national level. Nevertheless, literature on global, regional, and national levels is briefly treated here; in the presupposition that common themes among levels of analysis help to understand dynamics that are evident at local level, but that are actually part of trans-level processes. Thus, the presentation of the relevant literature is made following the mentioned paths: the theoretical concern about the compatibility between government and governance and the three main levels of analysis. This chapter proposes a matrix made with these two elements in order to classify the various dimensions of the governance understandings, producing a dynamic picture of mutual influence among authors that roughly follows a chronological sequence.

The basic argument of this chapter is that in the national and sub-national level of analysis, governance literature has moved increasingly from an apparently context-free treatment of the characteristics of governance, to the reconsideration of the importance of national and local contexts, and how they shape local governance patterns. By 'context-free' I mean that, in spite of being generated in the particular contexts of western industrialised countries, early theoretical frameworks developed governance understandings that did not acknowledge the important role of those contexts in determining the particular forms and modalities of governance.

The transition towards the reconsideration of context is especially evident if the first widely influential governance frameworks are compared with the latest contributions in the field. Kooiman (1993) and Rhodes (1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997), propose an understanding of governance that is very different to that of government, to the



point of questioning the steering capabilities of governments in the face of growing fragmentation and complexity. On the other hand, Pierre (2000), and Pierre and Peters (2000), make a point in arguing that governance is, in many aspects, an adaptation strategy of the state that strengthens governments in selected policy sectors. These authors put forward the idea that government and governance are part of a 'continuum', warning against any form of dichotomisation between them, which would be an oversimplification of the complexities of both paradigms of policy-making.

Finally, contributions like those of Bevir and Rhodes (2003), Cole and John (2001), Gaster (2002), John (2001), and Le Gales (2002) propose that local governance patterns are shaped by national and local contexts, producing 'comparable but not identical trends' among different countries (Cole and John, 2001: x). By 'context' the mentioned authors mean political and procedural culture, values, the structure of government, previous interactions of networks, and institutions in general. The latest contributions open governance literature to the possibility of offering differentiated and more sophisticated accounts of the supposed transition from government to governance.

This dissertation draws its theoretical framework, mainly, from these developments in local governance understandings. As a result, although other approaches are considered, governance in this dissertation is understood as a consistent method of public policy-making based in interactions with networks (John, 2001). In this sense, in the seminal categorisation of the basic forms of co-ordination proposed by Thompson, Frances, Levacic, and Mitchell (1991), governance would be the



equivalent to the regular use of networks by governmental managers. Government and governance are considered here as paradigms of policy-making and implementation, leaving behind understandings of governance as a different socio-political order.

This chapter deals first with the insufficiencies of the traditional governmental mechanisms to deal with increasingly complex policy problems, which is the departing point of most governance frameworks. Then the criteria used for the selection of the relevant contributions are explained, and are followed by the governance frameworks themselves, explained in the way already mentioned. Finally, the concluding section proposes some useful commonalities of the analysed contributions to governance literature by explaining the PhD general framework.

### **The insufficiency of government**

One of the core assumptions in the governance literature is that government failure is not only caused by the increased complexity of policy problems, but also by the “inherent shortcomings of its traditional instruments” to deal with situations that are qualitatively different to what was the standard when the governmental paradigm of policy-making was being formed (Mayntz, 1993: 10).

Governance frameworks presuppose that government, at least in its traditional hierarchical form, is no longer sufficient for solving most of the problems it has to confront to accomplish its objectives. The literature points at substantial limitations, related to constitutional ways in which traditional governments intervene in society.

Clear and legitimate hierarchies, a sharp distinction between the public and private spheres, and the “attempts to neutrality underpinning the exercise of power” (John, 2001:98) do not ensure the legitimacy and steering capabilities that are necessary for sustainable collective action. Additionally, financial and other kinds of resources are distributed among a greater number of actors, in different levels of governmental and non-governmental spheres (Kooiman, 1993), with the resulting “power dependence” among them (Stoker, 1998: 18). Indeed, some governance frameworks have presented contemporary governments as actors operating with ‘one hand tied behind their backs’ in policy sectors where policy and inter-organizational networks are powerful (e.g. Rhodes, 1997).

Traditionally, the role of government has been analysed according to the effectiveness in accomplishing its mandate, which is shaped by the expectations of society (Lipset, 1959). The governmental role defined in this way, however, does not necessarily mean that the conventional exercise of government requires citizen involvement beyond elections to legitimise policy. As Rosenau (1992) points out, governmental interventions can be sustained without the immediate support or knowledge of the majority of the governed, or even regardless of their opposition. In governmental patterns of interaction, citizens are expected to play a complementary or subordinated role to government in order to ensure the effective implementation of policy (Pierre and Peters, 2000). This modality of interaction is enforced and sustained by rules and other institutions, among which the separation of the public and private interests has a place of importance.



In the classical Weberian framework, legal authority is established on rational grounds in order to regulate private interests and promote public goods (Weber, 1983). The impersonality of bureaucratic rules aim at ensuring not only that laws themselves are general, but also that they are applied to particular cases in a consistently impersonal way (Weber, 1978). Bureaucratic rules enable the establishment of the differential between public and private interests. Officials should “be completely separated from ownership of the means of production or administration” (Weber, 1978: 219) and therefore, their personal property and interests should be distinguishable from those of bureaucracy. Despite the fact that the concrete definition of public interest is left to the consensus of the particular societies, government is assumed to play a role in it by regulating private interests on an equal basis. The main assumption here is that equality is only possible to the extent that private interests do not control state institutions. Government seeks to accomplish public objectives, which are distinct from private ones. Once public and private interests were identified, traditional governmental activity was defined in terms of efficiency in administration and the gathering of optimum information in order to take rational decisions (Coase 1937). Government was considered a technical matter, especially in policy sectors like basic urbanisation services like paving, public lighting, sewers, etc. (Downs, 1957).

One of the first assertions of governance literature was to recognise the failure of government to meet societal expectations, especially in the areas of effective regulation, welfare, and development (Mayntz, 1993). Its decreasing levels of legitimacy, the lack of citizens’ conformity with closed processes of policy-making and implementation, and a generalised technical ineffectiveness in tackling complex



policy sectors have prompted more fundamental doubts about government as a paradigm of policy-making (ibid.). That government could fail was a known fact well before the advent of governance literature (e.g. Downs, 1967). What is new is the kind of conclusions that are drawn from these failures. Mayntz (1993) argues that traditional government's instruments are not able to solve most contemporary problems because the conditions in western industrialised countries have become too complex, especially in terms of fragmentation. Concentrating in the technical character that is expected from governmental interventions, Mayntz (1993: 15) points at the almost "insolvable problem" for the central authority to obtain sufficient information to decide, for "it is impossible under conditions of high complexity to make general and long-term forecasts of the kind of behaviour of specific actors". The only solution is either to modify the traditional instruments of government, or to lower the expectations of what it can accomplish (ibid; Pierre, 2000).

Additionally, the aforementioned distinction between the public and private spheres - a requirement to the effective functioning of government according to traditional understandings of it- becomes less clear as fragmentation and interdependencies among actors grow. The paradox of the 'blurring boundaries' among different kinds of actors lies in the fact that they can be interpreted both as cause and solution of some governmental problems. On the one hand, governance literature abounds in references to the accountability related problems that 'blurredness' between public and private functions cause to the traditional ways of keeping public actors in check. On the other, the involvement of private actors in policy-making and implementation can also be interpreted as a means to obtain indispensable resources that government lacks.

‘Governance’ goes beyond ‘government’ because its literature considers not only the formal sources of legitimacy and social-political order, but also the societal actors that contribute towards the final results of policy implementation (Holsti, 1992). Differently from traditional public administration approaches, governance frameworks recognise that non-governmental actors are capable of offsetting the traditional patterns of public-private interactions and of imposing new ones over state institutions. Governance frameworks reject the usual “simplistic dichotomies that inform the social sciences” (Jessop, 1998: 31), trying to go beyond the public-private distinction in order to find the loci of real decision-making (Hyden 1992). In this sense, governance literature recognises the insufficiency of the paradigm of government to explain the emergent patterns of interactions between the public and private spheres, and uses the examples of government’s failure to question the validity of its instruments.

### **Mapping contemporary understandings of governance**

Contributions to the governance literature have in common the above-mentioned departure from the paradigm of government. However, this criterion is too wide to attempt a classification of governance understandings based solely on it. Governance frameworks can also be distinguished according to their explanatory capacity and, therefore, their theoretical status (Payne, forthcoming 2005); in addition, their level of analysis offers another criterion to distinguish among them (Krahmann, 2003).

The first criterion to organise this literature review is that it focuses on the analysis that governance frameworks make of the role and influence of government. Hirst



(2000: 13) has drawn attention to the fact that the concept of governance has been constructed “largely at the expense of the concept of government”. In that sense, governance understandings have dedicated a considerable effort to demonstrate that the concept of ‘governance’ stands for something qualitatively different to ‘government’, either as a social-political system, as patterns of interaction between political actors, or as methods of policy-making and implementation. The quotation of Hirst also implies that, at least in earliest formulations, governance is presupposed to be an alternative or substitute for government (e.g. Rhodes, 1995). This presupposition, however, stands out against the fact that governance has not replaced government, which, in many aspects, continues to be a formidable source for legitimacy, resources, and rules for allocation of goods (John, 2001; Pierre and Peters, 2000). Thus, the point is one of compatibility between two paradigms of policy-making. The proposals range from the different “spheres of authority” (Rosenau, 1997: 145) to varying degrees of coexistence (Cole and John, 2001; Pierre and Peters, 2000).

In the second place, this literature review considers only governance understandings that are *theoretical* frameworks. This means that regardless of the particular assessment about the consistency or accuracy of models, contributions considered in this chapter treat governance as an analytical tool. In this way, I follow the distinction argued by Payne (forthcoming 2005: 2) between governance ‘projects’ and ‘theories’. While projects are “particular programmes” whose “purpose [...] is not to analyse the world, but to change it”, theories “endeavour to understand and explain practices of governance”. This differentiation is useful because it allows the relevant literature to



be narrowed down substantially. Thus, good governance, corporate governance, and other highly normative approaches are not within the scope of this literature review.

Having said that, it is appropriate to remember that the theoretical status of governance understandings has been a disputed matter. At one end of the spectrum are Stoker (1998), and Peters and Pierre (1998), who treat governance as a valid (although in some ways limited) theoretical tool. In this first consideration, the term is defined as an organising “conceptual framework” (Stoker, 1998: 18) whose presence supplies analytical categories and explanations that cannot be obtained using traditional approaches. Peters and Pierre (1998) argue that governance is a political theory because its literature offers explanations about the exchanges between state and society. In a later work, Pierre and Peters (2000: 7) qualify their previous argument, saying that governance ‘theories’ are in reality “proto-theories” or theories in the process of consolidation. This position acknowledges that governance literature still has lacunae and inchoate elements waiting to be developed. This position is confirmed in other, more recent, contributions (e.g. Cole and John, 2001; and John, 2001). At the other end are Smouts (1998) and Hewitt de Alcántara (1998) who argue that governance appears to be a *vacant* conceptual structure. According to this second approach, ‘governance’ does not qualify as a theory because of its lack of “content” (Smouts, 1998: 81). The latter is provided by theories of socio-political and individual change, which are the real explanatory categories behind governance frameworks.

Finally, the third criterion used in this literature review is a classification based on level of analysis, according to the argument of Krahmann (2003). Many of the most

influential contributions have been made for the national and sub-national levels of analysis (e.g. Pierre and Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1997). Nevertheless, other seminal works, like those of Rosenau and Czempiel (1992), and Kooiman (1993) were written with global governance and societal (multi-level) governance in mind, respectively. This thesis makes a differentiated treatment of governance according these levels, in the understanding that global, societal, and local governance describe different patterns of interaction among public-private actors.

Table 1 shows the classification proposed in this chapter. This, being a dissertation on local governance, focuses on contributions that were designed for the national and sub-national level, which explains their greater number. Some works on regional and global governance are mentioned, but only because they are considered seminal contributions that influenced later understandings of national and sub-national governance. Therefore, the list of contributions for supranational levels of analysis should not be considered exhaustive. The following sections of the chapter will explain governance understandings according to this table. Their sequence is defined by their analysis of the role of government in conditions of governance.

#### *Governance defined as a social-political order*

The first cluster of authors analysed in this chapter treats governance as an equivalent to ‘social-political order’. Governance has been defined as a social-political order in, basically, two ways. In a first, loose way, governance is understood as a synonym for other concepts like ‘political system’, ‘regime’, ‘state structure’, ‘order’, and ‘control’ (Krahmann, 2003). In this sense, governance “can refer to any mode of coordination



of interdependent activities” (Jessop, 1998: 29) and be applied to national, sub-national, and supranational contexts.

**Table 1. Governance understandings**

Level of analysis	Governance defined as a social – political order. Government a player among many	Governance and government defined as different political systems, “spheres of authority”, or steering modalities	Governance and government as ideal types in a “continuum”	Governance and government co-exist in politics in varying ways, shaped by national and local contexts
National and sub-national	Kooiman, 1993, 2000, 2002 (“social governance”). Kooiman and Eliassen, 1988. Mayntz, 1993.	Stoker, 1995. John and Cole, 1995. Rhodes, 1981, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2000 (“Rhodes model”). Börzel, 1997, 1998; Daly, 2003; De Bruijn and Ringeling, 1999; Hanf and O’Toole, 1992; Jordan, 1990 (governance as networks).	Krahmann, 2003 Peters, 1997; Pierre, 2000; Pierre and Peters, 2000 (“the government – governance continuum”).	Bevir and Rhodes, 2003. Cole and John, 2001. Gaster, 2002. John, 2001. Le Gales, 2002.
Regional	Kooiman, 1993, 2000, 2002 (“social governance”).	Rhodes, 1997 (if applied in a trans-border analysis, like Blatter, 2003 attempts).	Krahmann, 2003 Marks, 1996; Marks, Hooghe, and Blank, 1996 (“multi-level governance”).	Blatter, 2003.
Global	Jessop, 1998 Kooiman, 1993, 2000, 2002 (“social governance”).	Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992; Rosenau, 1997 (“global governance”).	Krahmann, 2003	Payne, 2005 (forthcoming).

Source: Own elaboration.

This understanding, however, does not represent a relevant innovation other than reminding the reader that the final outcome of the analysed process is caused by the interaction of both governmental and non-governmental actors. The innovation



comes in a second, more restricted, way to define governance as order. Governance can be understood as a *specific* mode of social coordination (Mayntz, 1993) where drawing a distinction among roles of actors, or their effects in society as a whole, is not possible or easily done. The main governance framework that uses this approach is Kooiman's (1993a: 258) "social governance".

Drawing from basic assumptions of complexity theory, like the proposition of emerging patterns that result from the interaction of many actors (Battram, 1998; Mihata, 1997), Kooiman developed a definition of "social governance":

Governance can be seen as the pattern or structure that emerges in a social-political system as common result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors. [Social governance] is the functional interdependence between formally and/or relatively autonomous (non-hierarchically ordered) political and social actors (Kooiman, 1993a: 258).

Kooiman argues that in a social- political system, considered as a whole,

No single actor has the possibility of 'doing the job' (solving a problem or grasping an opportunity) unilaterally. No actor is so dominant as to enforce a single line of behaviour (Ibid).

"Social governance", then, is the result of the interaction of existing traditional structures and actors of government, their 'eroded' methods and interventions, new

socio-political actors, and new forms of social mediation (Kooiman, 2000). All of them try to introduce 'order' in the political system, and governance is the result of all their combined, and sometimes, competing efforts (Kooiman and Eliassen, 1988).

This does not mean that government is irrelevant, but that governability is the result of maintaining equilibrium between the emergent trends and the established ones (Kooiman, 1993). Kooiman argues that governing is not external to (or opposed to) society. Government's efforts to control diversity, complexity, and dynamic interrelations, are part of the self-organising tendencies of every complex system (Kooiman, 1993a). Government is distributed among different governmental and non-governmental actors, all capable of imprinting direction to some social-political processes (Kooiman, 2000). By blurring the boundaries of governmental intervention, Kooiman equates government to societal 'co-government'.

In an environment where complexity, dynamics and diversity are on the rise, the outcomes of governing actions do not depend on established static structures, but on flexibility, co-production and co-operation among the different public and private actors. This has generated a redefinition of the traditional role of government:

Seen from the point of view of more traditional public governing activities, there has been an increase in the role of governments as a facilitator and as a co-operating partner, for example through public-private partnerships and covenants. Hence, it is generally more appropriate to speak of shifting roles of government rather than of shrinking roles of government. A reshuffling of government tasks and a



greater awareness of the need to co-operate with other societal actors does not render traditional government interventions obsolete. It merely implies a growing awareness of the limitations of traditional government “command-and-control” interventions. (Kooiman, 2002: 6)

The main innovation –and, at the same time, difficulty- of the societal “co-government” framework is its systemic outlook. This understanding of governance implies that resources to deal with social-political issues are distributed among governmental and non-governmental actors. The problems of governance are seen as a shared responsibility and, thus, the only real difficulty is to locate resources, because systems maintain overall equilibrium (Peters, 2000). In the long term, governance is understood as the capacity of a society to meet its needs, the capacity of the social-political system “to govern itself within the context of the broader systems of which it is part” (Kooiman, 1993a: 259).

Kooiman has been influential in what Marinetto (2003: 597) calls the “Anglo governance school” with the introduction of an approach that goes beyond any dichotomy of analysis. By stressing the trans-sectoral character of political dynamisms, his understanding of governance exposes interdependencies that transcend institutional boundaries, which allows us to pay attention to the real explanatory causal relations. For Kooiman, government is another player in the system of governance. This produces an understanding of government’s steering capabilities that acknowledges their limitations, without necessarily being pessimistic. As Mayntz (1993) points out, this systemic approach assumes that most social-political processes are self-sustained and self-organised. Government only intervenes



when it wants to change the direction of some of these processes. As a consequence, a redefinition, or even the diminution, of governmental roles does not necessarily entail a risk for the self-sustaining dynamisms of society. Government, after all, is considered to have a limited influence on the overall configuration of the social-political system.

In addition, Kooiman's understanding of governance can be applied to any level of analysis. If governance is defined as the result of all the actors' interactions, then it is suitable for the local, national, regional or global levels of analysis, as long as the system of reference is well defined. However, here lies one of the main difficulties of this governance understanding. Defining the borders of the system, or level of analysis, implies the selection of the actors that will be considered relevant to explain governance outcomes, but this is not easily done in polities where interdependencies abound and change rapidly. Kooiman does not offer much in the way of empirical evidence to support the immediate utility of "social governance". It remains a stirring and stimulating concept that has generated useful hypotheses that, nevertheless, are difficult to prove. Finally, it is important to observe that "social governance" implies a context-free treatment of social-political systems. It is assumed that as long as the basics of the model are taken in account, "social governance" is able to explain any social-political situation in any level of analysis. However, this still has to be proved empirically.

*Governance and government as different orders or “spheres of authority”*

If governance defined as a social-political order includes government in governance, there are other approaches that offer a more differentiated understanding of them. The authors considered in this section argue that governance is an ‘order’, i.e. a pattern of interactions, a “sphere of authority” (Rosenau, 1997: 145), or a paradigm of policy-making that is qualitatively different to government. According to this understanding, governance is characterised by:

- 1) A set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government;
- 2) [it] identifies the blurring boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues;
- 3) governance identifies the power dependence [...] in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action;
- 4) [it] is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors;
- 5) governance recognises the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. (Stoker, 1998: 18).

Propositions 2), 4), and 5) are particularly relevant. The ideal type for government is based on the distinction between roles, as already mentioned, and public-private blurredness changes the ways in which government works. Proposition 4) is the basis for the ‘governing without government’ approach (Rhodes, 1996) and number 5) is the fundamental assumption of ‘governance without government’ (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992). Both governance understandings assume that the patterns of social-



political interactions have changed substantially in the recent past, diminishing the effectiveness of government in the process.

#### Governance without government

One of the first understandings to argue that government and governance are qualitatively different political orders was proposed by Rosenau (1995, 1997) and Rosenau and Czempiel (1992) for the analysis of global governance. For these authors, the key of the government–governance distinction is the kind of means used to maintain a certain pattern of social–political interactions. Government relies on hierarchy and command to maintain ‘order’, but this is not strictly necessary for the “framing of goals, the issuing of directives, and the pursuit of policies” (Rosenau, 1995: 14). While traditional government frameworks assume that by exerting command they can achieve control, governance understandings propose that political order is the result of intended interventions of a greater number and diversity of individual actors and institutions (Rosenau, 1997).

Rosenau (1997: 147) argues that there are lax forms of control that rest on “a modicum of regularity, a form of recurrent behaviour that systematically links the efforts of controllers to the compliance of controllees”. If political order is defined in this way, then “it follows that systems of rule can be maintained...even in the absence of established legal or political authority” (Ibid.). This point (political order without legal authority) is what enables Rosenau (ibid.: 145) to define governance as a different system of rule with its own “sphere of authority”. Indeed, this governance understanding was created to offer an explanation for the apparent ‘governance

without government' of world affairs (Young, 1997). Global interactions are characterised by the absence of a world central authority and, at the same time, the presence of qualities that are usually considered part of governmental orders:

This political world scene has no government, no real legitimate centre, no government responsible for world affairs, except economic affairs to some extent; yet norms, representations and rules have developed, conflicts are increasing, ways of resolving conflicts are being organized, and regulations are appearing, all of which brings us back to the term of governance (Le Gales, 2002: 86).

In governance at the global level, “there is no single organizing principle...no emergent order around which communities and nations are likely to converge” (Rosenau, 1995: 16). Seen from this perspective, “governance is the sum of a myriad, literally millions of control mechanisms driven by different histories, goals, structures, and processes” (Rosenau, 1997: 149). As a result, governance is also characterised by the dispersal of power. Power diffusion, in turn, is accompanied by “pockets of coherence operating in different levels and in different parts of the world” (Rosenau, 1995:18).

Both government and governance are “spheres of authority” in the sense that they are consequences of “purposive behaviour” and “goal-oriented activities” (Rosenau, 1992: 4). But governance refers specifically to:



the capacity to get things done without the legal competence to command that they be done. Where governments...can distribute values authoritatively, governance can distribute them in a way that is not authoritative but equally effective. Governments exercise rule, governance uses power (Czempiel, 1992: 250).

Governance is equivalent to consensus reached outside governmental hierarchical interventions. In ontological terms, 'governance without government' presupposes a political environment where self-organisation is pervasive but consensus is achievable (Jessop, 1997). In government, conversely, self-organisation appears to be more limited by state institutions (Czempiel, 1992). Governance is different from government given that they develop different patterns of interaction among actors, and they have diverse instruments to sustain them. However, both "spheres of authority" are not coexistent in the sense that they are intended for different levels of analysis and action. The national and sub-national sphere of action is the natural environment for governments, while governance describes the state of affairs at supra-national level. This has been an important cause of criticism, for it would appear that 'global governance' is not different to 'global order' or even 'control' (Finkelstein, 1995).

'Global governance' has shaped discussions on governance in the International Relations literature, exemplified by specific case studies. This understanding, however, is closely linked to a specific level of analysis –that of world affairs. In the first instance, the particular contexts related to this governance understanding do not concern local governance; the main reason being that at sub-national levels

government is not absent. Nevertheless, the ‘governance without government’ idea has been useful to stimulate sub-national studies on political interactions that emerge in policy sectors where the powers of government are absent or diminished. Table 2 is a summary of this governance understanding.

**Table 2. Government and Governance as “spheres of authority”**

Government	Governance
Intentional (purposive) behaviour constructed around goals	Intentional (purposive) behaviour constructed around <i>shared</i> goals
Enforced by formal authority in an environment of limited self-organisation	Constructed by resource sharing and “power dependence” in a self-organised environment
Centric (hierarchic)	Polycentric (heterarchic)
It can exist without the support of majority	It cannot exist without consensus of majority

Source: Developed from Czempiel (1992), Jessop (1997, 1998), and Rosenau (1992, 1997).

The Rhodes model

Another governance understanding that treats government and governance as different political orders is the model developed by R. A. W. Rhodes, which arguably is the most influential among the contributions to the “Anglo governance school”. Rhodes begins by proposing a model of intergovernmental relations (IGR) conducted by rational “games” between central and local levels of government (Stoker, 1995: 106). In these ‘games’, political actors use “constitutional, legal, organizational, financial, political, and [informational]” resources in order to gain influence over governmental decisions (ibid.). Rhodes’s original contribution is to consider that these ‘games’ take place in an arena that goes beyond the bureaucratic sphere, including also non-governmental actors and having policy networks as main unit of analysis (see Rhodes, 1981, 1997).



Networks, particularly policy networks, shape IGR (Rhodes, 1990). Increased political and societal fragmentation has modified governmental structures and functioning, to the point that governments are better described as “segmented executives” (Rhodes, 1997: 4) rather than unitary bodies. The result, considering resource limitation, is that bodies and levels of government depend on resources of other bodies and levels (Rhodes, 1997; Stoker, 1995). Rhodes argues that in order to cope with “power dependence” and competition, governmental actors form policy communities with non-governmental actors (Rhodes, 1990: 303), establishing relationships to exchange resources (Rhodes, 1997: 37). Through policy networks, the sectors of government that have established coalitions with non-governmental actors try to be dominant in their respective areas of interest (*ibid.*).

The fragmentation of the state into competing and strong inter-organizational policy networks, it is argued, has generated a great array of alternative arrangements to traditional government (Jessop, 1998: 29). This change has been interpreted as a “decline” of government in favour of the “exercise of authority by non-governmental institutions coupled with claims [...] to legitimacy” (Painter and Goodwin, 1995: 345). Local governance, defined by this approach, is understood as the implementation of public-private partnerships in administration (Clarke and Gaile, 1997). Especially in the British context, local governance means bringing in “a whole raft of new bodies...all appointed, whilst removing functions from elected governments at the same time” (Andrew and Goldsmith, 1998: 105).

Rhodes (1996: 660) argues that governance refers primarily to “self-organizing, inter-organizational networks”. By self-organisation, he basically means (i) autonomy from

the state and (ii) self-government (Rhodes, 1997, 2000). These characteristics imply unaccountability to the state and therefore, possible problems within the traditional processes that link policy outcomes to officials' responsibility. For Rhodes (2000: 75) self-organisation is related to private interests. Therefore, when powerful inter-organizational networks seem to override the state's steering capabilities, his conclusion is that traditional government conditions have changed qualitatively. Indeed, the presence of networks and their increased power produces "polycentricity", i.e. multiple centres of real decision making dispersed in the governmental and non-governmental spheres (Bogason and Toonen, 1998: 216). Thus, the presence of inter-organizational networks implies "new [processes] of governing, or a changed condition of ordered rule, or [a] new method by which society is governed" (Rhodes, 1996: 653). These conditions signal the shift from government to governance.

Inter-organizational networks, however, have been always part of political systems. The variation introduced by the Rhodes model is that it argues that networks have become more numerous, powerful, and influential, producing significant changes in the functioning of governments:

The governance approach does not claim networks are new, only that they have multiplied. Precise figures are not available, but the fragmentation of public services through the increasing use of special-purpose bodies and contracted-out services is obvious and widespread. (Rhodes, 2000: 64).



Governance implies that these networks are more open, complex and potentially unstable than hitherto and that bargaining and the building of trust form more of the story of political life than the standard operating procedures of bureaucracies, the closed nature of party government and the hidden power of local elites” (John, 2001: 9)

As Clapham and Kintrea (2000) argue, the problem from the governmental point of view is that influential and powerful inter-organizational networks can determine their own policies, even against the policy direction established by central authorities. The Rhodes model supposes that informal authority of networks can supplant the formal authority of government (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003). However, the immediate problem is how government can adapt to these new conditions, and steer networks into complementary roles, instead of competing ones:

The challenge of British government is to recognise the constraints on central action imposed by the shift to self-organising networks; and to search for new tools for managing such networks. Game playing, joint action, mutual adjustment and networking are the new skills of the public manager (Rhodes, 1995: 17).

In this understanding of governance, the analysis of governmental capacities in the middle of networks borders the pessimistic, especially concerning problems of accountability and policy coordination. Rhodes (1997: 100) recognises that government “is not hollowed out” completely. British central government retains control over a significant part of financial resources, which gives it a considerable

control over sub-national matters (*ibid.*). But this control is exerted over an “increasingly shrinking policy intervention base” (Marinetto, 2003: 595).

The innovations of the Rhodes model are many, but most of them coincide with Kooiman (1993) and Rosenau and Czempel (1992) in going beyond the government–society conceptual division to explain political dynamics. According to Rhodes (1995: 17), “focusing on governance dissolves the distinction between state and civil society”. In spite of the assessment of this particular assertion, the Rhodes model alerts us about the real places of decision-making, regardless of where they are in the bureaucratic structure or among societal institutions (Cole and John, 2001). By conceptualising the state as a collection of inter-organizational networks, Rhodes posed a major paradigm shift that has been very influential and is still under consideration through empirical studies.

Rhodes’s definition of governance, however, does not lack questionable aspects. The most important is the centrality that is assigned to inter-organizational networks, both in theoretical and empirical terms. I agree with Rhodes that all understandings of governance introduce inter-organizational methods or approaches to policy shaping. Nevertheless, this phenomenon of contemporary politics is not always central in politics, as empirical studies have demonstrated (cf. Blatter, 2003; Cole and John, 2001; Le Gales, 2002). As this dissertation argues, there are multiple ways in which the basic problems of government-society interdependencies, detected by the Rhodes model, are manifested.



The model proposed by Rhodes was designed specially for the national and sub-national level of analysis. Specifically, Rhodes is writing in order to explain the shift from government to governance in British politics. This evident trait of his governance understanding has become increasingly underlined in the local governance literature after empirical studies have contrasted the British experience with other European countries.

#### The shift from local government to local governance

Once Rhodes and other authors established the qualitative difference of government and governance, it became apparent that a substantial change, or “shift”, had taken place in British politics. The presupposition of a ‘shift from government to governance’ is ubiquitous in local governance literature. John (2001:xii) argues that the change introduced by inter-organizational networks and new forms of government-society interactions is not an adaptation of local government’s repertoire, but something “qualitatively different from what went on before” (ibid.: 168). The heart of the government to governance shift is that “traditional institutions have become less important in local politics” (ibid.: 167), which, in its turn, is the cause and effect of new modalities of government-society interactions.

The local governance literature has been especially abundant in analysing the particular forms of this shift in British politics. Just to mention some examples, Mlinar (1995:145) defines governance as the introduction of “hybrid frameworks of participation” in local administration, which allows the participation of citizens in policy-making and implementation. McLaverty’s (1998) concern is how British

government can effectively promote citizen involvement going around the problems of closed inter-organizational networks. Kjellberg (1995), Sharpe (1970), and Teune (1995) analyse the implications of the shift to governance over the traditional values of local government, arguing that governance does not necessarily improve local democracy and the quality of citizens' participation. The literature also includes comparative studies trying to determine the extent, in both qualitative and geographical terms, of the government to governance shift (cf. Cole and John, 2001; Desai and Imrie, 1998; John, 2001, and Le Gales, 2002). These latter contributions are analysed in a section below.

The concept of a shift to governance can be problematic when used as a synonym of transition, which brings us to the issue of movement between paradigms. Governance frameworks have already dealt with the problem, and have offered a differentiated account of this shift. It is now accepted that change does not occur in all policy sectors at the same pace, but that are areas in which the change happens more rapidly and affecting more actors (see John, 2001; Krahmann, 2001; and Pierre and Peters, 2000). The shift from government to governance, as it is explained in the following section, takes place in a varying way.

*Bringing government back in: the “government-governance continuum”*

Governance defined as a different “sphere of authority” to government produced a dichotomised view of the shift between them (Pierre and Peters, 2000). A political system could be classified either as ‘government’ or ‘governance’, according to the characteristics mentioned in the previous sections of the chapter. Authors analysed in



this section certainly recognise that traditional methods of administration, political clientelism, and strong party control are not effective enough to secure acceptance to public policy and societal co-operation as they did in the past (Cole and John, 2001). However, they also point out that governance has not replaced government (Le Gales, 2002). Government refuses to go away despite governance, and in some policy sectors it has become more resistant than it used to be.

The assertion of government's importance in governance is the result of the simple observation of the British and European cases. For example, in a study of four English local governments, Cole and John (2001: 120) conclude that:

Local government officers and councillors were at the heart of local political networks. While they could not dominate and dictate as before, they had the organisational, political, informational and financial resources to lead and persuade or cajole others to follow them.

Peters (1997: 51) had noticed this phenomenon before, arguing that governments in western industrialised countries continue to make “‘authoritative allocations of values for a society’, even if they choose to do so and to implement their authoritative decisions, in manners that at one time would have been considered very unconventional”. Other studies, like John (2001), Le Gales (2002), and Pierre and Peters (2000), have demonstrated that in European and non-European countries considered cases of governance, governments continue to be politically relevant beyond the central control of finances suggested by Rhodes (1997). Furthermore, Bevir and Rhodes (2003: 42) recognise that, despite all the changes in policy-making

and implementation involved in the “shift to governance”, government continues to be “a major way of delivering services in Britain”.

Governments are relevant, especially at sub-national level, where it still seems to have “reservoirs of legitimacy” (Peters, 1997: 52) that confirm its centrality in many policy sectors. What has changed, however, is “the selection of instruments and organizational arrangements through which the state imposes its will in society” (Pierre and Peters, 2000: 93). In the United Kingdom, local governance “is not synonymous with the effacement of local government” because “governance creates more choices as compared with more traditional government practices”, through which government seeks to increase its influence over society (Cole and John, 2001: 120). In this way, public-private partnerships and other forms of co-operation can reinforce the legitimacy and the political place of government as coordinator of collective action in some policy areas (Cole and John, 2001; Pierre and Peters, 2000).

There are two reasons that could explain this ‘governance with government’ arrangement. The first one is that powerful and autonomous inter-organizational networks do not behave as Rhodes (1997) expects. That is, policy-making and implementation based on networks could not necessarily entail strong private interests conducting public affairs, endangering in this way policy co-ordination and accountability to the state. It is possible that, as Cole and John (2001) and Peters (1997) argue, government deploys alternative means to influence networks and steer, albeit in a limited way, the policy processes. Other possible explanation lies in recent empirical studies on non-European contexts that argue that although local governance dynamics are present, not all take the form of strong inter-organizational



networks. Blatter (2003), for example, argues that patterns of interaction have changed in the trans-border zone between Mexico and The United States, confirming the fundamental local governance assumptions on fragmentation and increased self-organisation of actors. Nevertheless, he could not confirm the hypothesis of the ‘shift from hierarchies to networks’, for networks have not replaced bi-national and other governmental commissions dealing with important trans-border matters. In the same lines of argument, Desai and Imrie (1998) propose a differentiated account of local governance manifestations between India and the United Kingdom.

In any case, authors of this cluster of governance understandings seek to bring government back to the analysis of local governance, and analyse its modified role in conditions of more fragmentation. This is a necessity because the realisation of certain degree of coexistence between government and governance has been present in the literature for a time (cf. Pierre and Peters, 2000). If coexistence is the norm, then the really important point is the particular form that it takes when trying to accommodate qualitatively different ‘orders’ or paradigms of policy-making in the same polity.

Blatter (2003: 509) has suggested a way forward. Commenting on Genschel (1997), he argues that governmental institutions, when challenged by more complex environments, do not replace institutions with other institutions, but rather, they set up “supplementary” ones. This phenomenon, which Genschel (1997) calls “transposition”, implies that institutional adaptation to the external environment is gradual, and that, at some point, original and “supplementary institutions” coexist. This phenomenon is present in the case studies of this dissertation. Formal

institutions and the structure of local governments are, basically, the same in the Mexican municipalities considered. Nevertheless, formal descriptions of the position in the governmental structure can be misleading, as it seems that persons holding the same post can be asked to perform completely different tasks. The evidence collected suggests, as it is explained in the following chapters, that Mexican municipalities have adapted to conditions of governance by changing officials' tasks first and, in a later stage, government's structures. As John (2001) argues, governmental institutions in governance do not disappear, but they become more complex.

Government has to be brought back to governance analysis, but this is a different government to the one described in traditional public administration. Government in governance conditions means fragmented authorities sharing decision-making with non-governmental actors (Krahmann, 2003). Considering governmental fragmentation and citizens' involvement has prompted contributors like John (2001), Krahmann (2003), and Pierre and Peters (2000) to propose a governance understanding that treats the government–governance relationship as a “continuum”.

#### Government and governance as ideal typical poles in a continuum

This governance understanding questions the possibility of making any clear and comprehensive differentiation between examples of government and governance, especially if this classification is intended to consider all policy sectors and policy-making processes. Contributions considered in this section understand governance in more concrete ways, distancing themselves from definitions of ‘order’, and treating governance and government as paradigms of policy-making and implementation.



Pierre and Peters (2000) begin by acknowledging that governance does not mean the same as government. They accept that traditional approaches to government “are no longer either fully descriptive nor fully acceptable” in contemporary politics (Peters, 1997: 52). Nevertheless, being different does not mean being mutually exclusive. Given the governmental fragmentation in western industrialised countries, and the variation in governance arrangements that it causes, it seems right to allow for a more differentiated account of the shift from government to governance. As Pierre and Peters (2000: 29) observe:

Rather than as a sharp dichotomy [...] it makes more sense to conceptualise the role of government and the state in governance as a continuum. Different governments and different policy areas are located at different points along this continuum, with a major analytical issue being understanding why those differences exist and what impact they have on the effectiveness of governance.

Thus, the difference between government and governance is “of degree rather than kind” (ibid.). This suggests that it is not possible to offer an overall categorisation of governance unless it is demonstrated that the shift to policy-making based on open networks has been significant, in a significant number of policy sectors. On the other hand, the change of “degree” argued by Pierre and Peters (2000) is hard to measure. The main problem is determining the quantitative parameters that should be used to distinguish between cases of government and governance. Krahmann (2003: 340) has located this problem when she argues that

it is difficult to specify which or how many dimensions have to be fragmented to qualify a policy-making arrangement as governance rather than government, not least because the institutions and practices in each dimension are dynamic and constantly evolving. Separate dimensions may proceed either toward greater fragmentation or towards integration. In fact, different dimensions might display countervailing trends.

The idea of the government-governance continuum implies a quantitative dimension that is difficult to analyse. Rhodes (1997, 2000) has argued that governance is constructed by a set of quantitative changes that eventually produce qualitative ones. The increment of the empowerment of inter-organizational networks, fragmentation, and 'blurredness' of functions, reaches a point when traditional governmental instruments cease to be effective (*ibid.*) Nevertheless, defining the point at which the 'shift' takes place is problematical and not very useful. Being able to offer an exact differentiation between government and governance does not add any significant advantage to contemporary analyses, especially because they are offering increasingly differentiated accounts of governance that distinguish between policy sectors (see e.g. Cole and John, 2001; and Le Gales, 2002). In the end, the qualitative approach used by most contributors to governance literature suffices to give a general orientation to research questions, hypotheses, and empirical studies. The qualitative approach to defining governance ponders policy sectors and processes that are considered significant; it analyses general conditions of fragmentation and blurredness, and proposes the classification of 'governance' when there have been changes of substance in government-society interactions. This, of course, does not rule out any



attempt at measuring differences of government and governance by quantitative methods.

The government-governance continuum offers a picture of fragmented administrations with contrasting, and possibly conflicting, degrees of proximity to one paradigm or the other. Krahmann (2003: 332) has worked on this idea, developing seven dimensions in which policies can be nearer to government or to governance: geographical scope, function, distribution of resources, interests, norms, decision-making, and policy implementation. For her, this is only a rough guide that indicates general tendencies, but that could offer a basis to attempt a classification of political systems. Table 3 is an explanation of government and governance as “poles on a continuum” (ibid.).

**Table 3. Government and Governance as poles on a continuum**

Dimensions	Government	↔	Governance
Geographical scope	Sub-national National		Sub-national National Regional Global Trans-national
Functional scope	Several issue areas		Single issue area
Distribution of resources	Centralised		Dispersed
Interests	Common		Differentiated
Norms	Sovereignty Command and control Redistribution		Limited sovereignty Self-government Market
Decision-making	Hierarchical Consensus Formal equality		Horizontal Negotiation Inequality
Implementation	Centralised Authoritative Coercive		Fragmented Self-enforced Voluntary

Source: Krahmann, 2003: 332.

John (2001) has also developed the idea of a government-governance continuum. For him, the fact that governance has not replaced government has produced a

mixture of traditional governmental institutions (like law, taxes as main source of revenue, political parties, and powerful senior bureaucrats) with new institutions (e.g. public-private partnerships, citizens' councils, and networks) (ibid.:17). As a result, it is better to conceptualise government and governance as ideal types, for they are helpful to establish frameworks of analysis and hypotheses without disregarding the complex variety of governance arrangements of real political systems (ibid.). Table 4 is a summary of his governance understanding according to general variables. This definition of governance presupposes that a concrete political system can develop different degrees of proximity to one or another ideal type, depending on the analysed variable.

**Table 4. Local government and governance contrasted**

	<b>Government</b>	<b>Governance</b>
1 Number of institutions	Few	Many
2 Bureaucratic structure	Hierarchical Consolidated	Decentred Fragmented
3 Horizontal networks	Closed	Extensive
4 International networks	Minimal	Extensive
5 Democratic linkage	Representative	Representative + new experiments
6 Policies	Routinized	Innovative learning
7 Central government	Direct control	Decentralizes + micro control
8 Leadership	Collegial / clientelistic	Mayoral / charismatic

Source: John, 2001: 17.

An underpinning assumption of the government-governance continuum is that the adaptive capacity of the state is greater than what is acknowledged by previous governance understandings. Unlike Rhodes (1995, 1997) or Stoker (1998), the 'continuum' understanding of governance stresses that power dependence can be part of the adaptation process of the state to new societal conditions. By focusing on governance as a modality of policy-making and implementation, John (2001), Krahmann (2003), and Pierre and Peters (2000) recognise that the different degrees



of proximity to the poles of the continuum have allowed government to remain as an important player in many policy sectors. Governments have relinquished some of their prerogatives and modified others in order to gain acceptance of policy in key areas, and diminish their problems in policy sectors in which they cannot give satisfactory results (Pierre and Peters, 2000).

In this sense, the ‘continuum’ model assumes that government’s officials have at their disposal a greater variety of means to steer and influence policy outcomes than in the past. As Rhodes (1995) argues, they can choose among hierarchies, markets, and networks, according to the particular context, in order to solve problems more efficiently. Government and governance are different sets of interaction patterns between the state and the citizens that seek to solve, basically, the same societal problems (Pierre and Peters, 2000). The difference is that the governance approach is “post-political” in the sense that it uses alternative methods that do not follow the public-private separation; thus, roles, resources, and interaction patterns traditionally assigned separately to governors or governed are now considered mutual.

The governance ideal type defined by the most recent contributions incorporates elements that offer a more detailed picture of local governance in western industrialised countries. The model developed by John (2001: 14-17) is especially relevant, for it also considers governmental efforts to deal with the unintended outcomes of policy-making based on networks. Table 5 is a summary of his positions, the observations of “revived central initiatives” and “the search for new mechanisms of control and accountability” being particularly important. Among these we can find the “more prominent forms of executive leadership” that,

paradoxically, are normally considered a component of government. John's (2001) argument is that in a more fragmented government the role of a strong leadership (in this case a strong mayor) is necessary for introducing policy coherence among all the governmental departments involved in solving complex problems. The evidence collected in this dissertation suggests that this leadership is exerted not only through the usual bureaucratic channels, but goes beyond them in order to establish direct links with society.

One possible problem with the government-governance continuum is that it appears to imply the concept of linearity of change. On the one hand, Pierre and Peters (2000) offer a useful tool when they think of local policy-making as a set of different *tracks* of policy sectors, where public and private actors interact in order to achieve political objectives. The framework explains conflicting policies and, at the same time, it takes into consideration Rhodes's (1997) proposals regarding the importance of networks in policy shaping. On the other hand, this governance understanding presupposes that policy sectors can be defined clearly. In reality, many of them overlap and influence each other. That is, policy developments sometimes resemble a three-dimensional area in a horizontal and vertical web, rather than a point in a horizontal track. In this way, change in a policy track could happen in non-linear ways when one policy sector influences another. The evidence collected by Cabrero-Mendoza (2002) in 39 Mexican municipalities suggests that relatively small programs, like the *Citizens' Day* described in chapter three, have had influence not only over paving, potable water, public lighting, and drainage programmes, for which it was designed, but also over wider and more strategic policy-making for the cities.



**Table 5. Governance as an ideal type**

Dimension	Characteristics	Observations
Institutional reform	Institutional multiplication	Creation of new levels of elected sub-national government, special purpose bodies, proliferation, and blurring boundaries (Stoker, 1998)
	Institutional restructuring	Adoption of NPM ideas, decentralisation, privatisation, contracting out, micro delivery agencies and new budgeting agencies
New networks	Stronger horizontal networks	Fragmentation, complexity and the presence of private actors facilitate the formation of links of trust, and in some occasions of urban regimes (Stone, 1989)
	New cross-national networks	Local authorities develop stronger cross-national links to access resources and influence policy
New policy initiatives	Local innovation and capacity building	The competition for scarce resources, and the opportunities in the areas from which the state has 'retreated', allow innovative solutions
	Revived central initiatives	Decentralisation does not imply that central government is powerless to influence local policy; the fragmented state reinvents its role in highly targeted policy areas; it becomes an actor and more prominent partner in networks
Responses to dilemmas of coordination and accountability	The search for new mechanisms of control and accountability	Broader networks diffuse the lines of control and command, producing lack of clarity. To counter the possible negative implications on democracy, authorities seek new ways to involve and mobilise citizens to legitimise policy
	More prominent forms of executive leadership	Complexity of public administration, fragmentation, and the growth of decision-making using networks produce the crisis of traditional ways of policy coordination. As a response, the office of leadership strengthens to fill the vacuum

Source: Elaboration on John, 2001: 14-16.

Finally, it is important to note that the 'continuum' understanding of governance was designed for national and sub-national contexts, and is especially useful for an environment of fragmented policy-making or implementation. This governance understanding is more context-minded, in the sense that it allows for greater local

variation than the definitions of Kooiman (1993), Rhodes (1997), and Rosenau and Czempiel (1992).

### Multi-level governance

Besides the 'continuum', "multi-level governance" (Marks, 1996; Marks, Hooghe, and Blank, 1996) is another governance understanding that has avoided making any sharp distinction between government and governance, reconsidering the importance of government in the process. This model was developed after the introduction of a supranational level of government in the European Union, and it tries to explain the apparent contradiction of states giving away power and sovereignty rights.

The basic assumption of the framework is that states, by giving away some carefully selected external decisions, actually strengthen their positions in domestic issues (Marks et al., 1996). The process is steered by state actors who seek to be re-elected or to maintain their power positions, and who may or may not "defend central state authority" (Marks, 1996: 35). The model assumes that political actors share the decision-making process. "Multi-level governance" is possible because political arenas are not "nested", as in the state-centric frameworks, but "interconnected" going beyond the usual categories of analysis (Marks et al. 1996: 346). The distinction between domestic and international matters becomes blurred when what happens at local level in one country can have important consequences at national or supranational levels in other.



In the same way as the “continuum” understanding of governance, the “multi-level” framework does not need to make distinctions between government and governance political orders. At the core of this approach lies the same set of assumptions present in Pierre and Peters (2000): a) fragmentation is never absolute because once it increases b) re-arrangements of interests and power dependencies take place, creating alternative centres of decision-making. But c) these re-arrangements seldom follow the state’s formal bureaucracies (Hirst, 1994). Governmental orders are not qualitatively different from governance ones because political power re-arrangements need resources originally owned by the state (Peters, 1997). This means that at least some of the new power dependencies are the state’s own making (Marks, 1996; Marks et al., 1996). This governance understanding was designed for making regional level analyses, and although not directly involved in local governance matters, it considers the new roles of cities in an environment where they can be influential vis-à-vis supranational, national, and sub-national governmental agencies, and national and international private actors within the European Union (Le Gales, 2002).

### *Contextualised governance*

The last group of understandings draw from earlier contributions their basic assumptions and arguments on governance. However, unlike previous contributions that can be criticised by their context-free approaches, Bevir and Rhodes (2003); Bevir, et al. (2003, 2003a); Cole and John (2001), Gaster (2002), John (2001), and Le Gales (2002) have installed national and local contexts as important variables that explain patterns of government-society interactions and mould governance

outcomes. In order to demonstrate this, they have taken, in part, the challenge posed by Pierre and Peters (2000) of conducting comparative research to figure out how governance looks like outside the United Kingdom. Their conclusions can be summed up in the argument of Cole and John (2001: x), who find ‘comparable but not identical’ patterns of governance between English and French cities. For the aforementioned authors, governmental and other kind of institutions, previous networks’ engagements, values, political and procedural cultures, among others, are factors that determine the final form that local governance takes in different countries.

The issue of context is important given the generic, and inappropriate, treatment that some governance frameworks have given to non-European regions. Pierre and Peters (2000) have argued that dynamics of governance should be considered as part of the state’s adaptation process to more complex conditions. When applying this idea to Latin America, however, they find this region as prone to state-weakness as Africa (ibid.: 185), a statement that is not proved by them. States in Africa and Latin America, they argue, have not been able to benefit from governance arrangements because the “predatory” and “clientelistic” traits of their political systems inhibit their capacity to increase in flexibility and modify, to their advantage, the traditional government-society patterns of interaction (Ibid: 187-188). They certainly acknowledge that in the cases of Mexico and Brazil this is somewhat different (ibid.186), but their treatment of the Mexican context is inadequate, for they do not offer a differentiated account of the diversity existing in African and Latin American Politics. Blatter (2003) analyses bi-national and international co-operation issues in the border between Mexico and the United States, but his main contribution lies in



the regional level of analysis. Gibbins (2001), on the other hand, makes a broad description of Mexican local governance conditions, but in so general terms that it is not useful to obtain a detailed account of the varying levels of fragmentation, 'blurredness' of functions, and self-organisation among political actors that can be found in Mexican municipalities. Mexico is practically absent in governance theoretical frameworks. This dissertation is a contribution to this gap that needs to be covered, for although governance understandings have had contexts of western industrialised countries as immediate origin, they propose basic theoretical dimensions, as fragmentation, blurredness, and self-organisation that are useful to explain local governance outcomes in Mexico.

Bringing context back into the governance analysis is invited by the foregoing discussions. John and Cole (1995), for example, argue that networks shape governance outcomes and form. If it is acknowledged that networks are not present in all contexts in the same way, then it is possible to link governance variety with network variety. In the same line of thought, Gaster (2002) recognises that the importance given to inter-organizational networks and other themes like political management, community leadership, partnerships, and citizens' involvement, is the response to the particular conditions of *British* local governance. Unlike previous contributions, this explicit acknowledgement of the contextual origins of the "Anglo governance school" has emphasised the need to conduct comparative studies.

Other important contribution in this sense is that of Cole and John (2001). These authors compare the cases of England and France, arguing that local governance in both countries is characterised by the presence of new actors participating in

decision-making, the change of the roles of traditional decision-makers, the change in routines of policy-making, new challenges in policy, and the implementation of contested accountability mechanisms. These traits, however, are ‘comparable, but not identical’, because national and local contexts, in addition to the particular policy areas, influence governance (ibid.: x). Thus, “there is no a ‘size fits all’ description of governance” (ibid.: xi). The presence of similar local governance trends in England and France does not necessarily mean a move towards convergence, but only that in both countries the interdependence between public, private, and societal actors has grown to different extents (ibid.: 142 – 143).

John (2001) has also contributed to the re-evaluation of context in local governance understandings. He studies the forms that local governance has taken in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Scandinavia, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and arrives at the conclusion that despite the differences in local governance patterns, there are trends that are cross-European, like the formation of regimes, institutional fragmentation, privatisation, institutional reform, new patterns of leadership, and the spread of NPM criteria. John (2001) makes a convincing case against the North-South divide in European local governance, for there are important similarities among countries. Thus, governance is not only a phenomenon of northern Europe. The difference lies in the fact that not all countries ‘develop all aspects of the government to governance shift’ (ibid.: 172). Local governance can be defined as an ideal type, and different countries display different degrees of development in the mentioned traits. A similar conclusion is reached by Le Gales (2002), who argues that a common trend in local governance in Europe is the corroboration of the European city as a decision-making locus. Bevir



et al. (2003) argue in the same lines, but from the institutional standpoint, after comparing experiences of local governance in Australia, Britain, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Norway.

Local governance in the analysed countries appears to have some commonalities that justify the usage of the term beyond the Anglo-Saxon context. For Cole and John (2001: 11), local governance in England and France is characterised by: a) increased fragmentation (i.e. the presence of non-elected agencies and quasi-public bodies with overlapping functions); b) blurring boundaries between areas of influence (public officials acting as entrepreneurs and private firms holding public responsibilities); and c) inter-organizational networks, which are considered a “necessary feature of governance”. For Goldsmith and Garrard (2000), local governance in European countries can be summed up in the presence of non-elected agencies conducting public matters, and the formation of local partnerships. For Desai and Imrie (1998), local governance in Britain and India has in common the proliferation of governmental agencies and new forms of design and implementation of policy. Krahmann (2003) has argued that the commonalities between different cases of governance go beyond the level of analysis, and that some qualities are common between local, national, regional, and global governance. In this way, “governance can universally be defined by fragmentation of political authority in different dimensions” (ibid.: 323-324). Finally, Stoker (1998) also established common elements in governance understandings, regardless of difference of context and level of analysis, as it was mentioned above.

Despite the common trends found in different contexts, and levels of analysis, the recent contributions mentioned in this section argue that “there is not an essentialist notion of governance” (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003: 43). In this way, “‘governance’ as applied to British government will mean something different to ‘governance’ in France” (ibid.: 14). The really important point is to determine the common and different trends in the studied cases and offer plausible explanations for these variations (Pierre and Peters, 2000). In this way,

there is no tool kit applicable within or across countries. Governance is constructed differently and continuously reconstructed so there can be no one set of tools. The battery of reforms masquerading under the single label of the New Public Management illustrates the point (Bevir et al. 2003a: 203).

This governance understanding recognises that there can be common trends between different countries, but that the variations are the result of national and local contexts; that is, the ‘shift’ from government to governance does not necessarily take the same form in all cases. As a consequence, the only possible way forward in regard the analysis of governance understandings is its comparison with as many different contexts as possible. Governance understandings like those of Kooiman (1993), Pierre and Peters (2000), and Rhodes (1997), although elegant and appealing for the analysis, as Bevir and Rhodes (2003) say, should be considered only as broad references to guide the research. The resulting picture of local governance has to be much more complex than the one offered by the first theoretical frameworks, considering all the different policy sectors, and the traditional and new institutions



that coexist with different degrees of fragmentation. In this way, a government-governance mixture is assumed in this governance understanding.

### **Conclusions: the dissertation's theoretical framework**

In this chapter, governance understandings were classified according to three criteria: their theoretical character, their analysis of the role of government, and their level of analysis. There has been a cumulative process by which some common themes and concerns have been preserved in most governance understandings as they have been developed. In this way, fragmentation, the blurring boundaries between public and societal actors and the presence of strong inter-organizational networks are commonalities among the main definitions of governance. These concepts are treated differently according to the level of analysis, even though there seems to be a common line of understanding linking the most influential authors of the “Anglo governance school”.

This dissertation draws its theoretical framework from the aforementioned contributions. Its main propositions are the following:

- 1) *Governance and government are not a dichotomy.* This dissertation assumes that government and governance are ideal types of policy-making and implementation (see John, 2001; Krahmann, 2003). As such, they are never fully verified in all their possible dimensions, but only partially developed in particular political systems. These ideal types are useful, for they identify overall trends of coordination modalities, but can be misleading if they are interpreted as poles in a

dichotomy. As Cerny (1997), Genschel (1997), and Payne (forthcoming 2005) argue, in real political systems what we can find is a blend of different ideal types of governance modalities. Hierarchies continue to be used and so are some traditional government's intervention mechanisms, like taxes and law enforcement (John, 2001). In situations of governance, however, policy-making processes based on networking, and characterised by fragmentation, accompany them. Equally important are policy arrangements based on the markets' participation in some policy sectors.

This combination produces political systems that, overall, are nearer to government or governance as ideal types (John, 2001; Pierre and Peters, 2000). But this general evaluation has to be qualified according to what happens *ad intra* in political systems, where traditional government mechanisms can be used pre-eminently in one policy sector, and governance networking and fragmentation in another. As Krahmann (2003) argues, in the same polity we could find countervailing tendencies. In this sense, government and governance cannot be considered to be mutually exclusive in the same political system. Another matter, of course, is how problematic it is to implement paradigms of traditional government and governance policy-making in the same policy area. This dissertation presupposes that in Mexican municipalities it is not possible to apply a sharp distinction between government and governance, but that they coexist in different policy sectors.

*B) In this dissertation, government and governance are considered as paradigms of policy-making and implementation. Governance understandings relate to definitions of*



social-political orders and the role that government plays in them. They presuppose a different kind of social-political order, where the traditional patterns of interaction between government and society are modified by increased fragmentation and the involvement of non-governmental actors in policy definition (Rhodes, 1997). Governance is more complex and requires more flexibility from political actors than traditional governmental orders (Kooiman, 1993). Nevertheless, the principal focus of this dissertation lies in the particular arrangements in policy-making and implementation. Therefore, although it is assumed that the general patterns of interaction between government and society have suffered changes in Mexican local governments, this thesis deals mainly with particular municipal policy sectors and how they have accommodated the shift from government to governance. The dissertation's conclusions suggest that changes in paradigms of policy-making at local level might be related to wider changes in the traditional relations of government and society, affecting important policy areas in the three levels of government. But this is beyond the scope of this research.

*C) Governance is characterised by increased fragmentation, blurredness, and self-organisation.*

This dissertation presupposes that governance is a “flexible pattern of public decision-making, based on loose networks of individuals” (John, 2001: 9). This definition assumes certain elements that are common to most governance understandings, and that point at basic traits of local governance in western industrialised countries. In the first place, governance as a policy-making paradigm supposes fragmentation. As it was explained above, this implies a move towards decentralisation and power dispersal into a greater number of

governmental or quasi-governmental agencies, many of which are composed by non-elected members from the three societal sectors (Andrew and Goldsmith, 1998). This produces policy coordination problems that are counterbalanced by the development of strong mayoral leaderships and other alternative steering methods based on personal governing styles (John, 2001).

In the second place, greater citizens' involvement in policy-making and the increase of the importance of networks blurs the Weberian distinction between the public and private spheres, producing private actors dealing with provision of public services, and governmental officials behaving like entrepreneurs (John, 2001). Finally, local governance presupposes that self-organisation, among networks and other non-governmental actors, has increased as the result of the government's modification of its traditional role (Kooiman, 1993). Nevertheless, fragmentation, blurredness, and self-organisation do not remain constant in the selected cases of study. The studied Mexican municipalities display variations that give different pictures of local governance, although such differences sometimes are minor. This dissertation considers that these governance outcomes are the dependent variable in the research, for they change according to conditions of the national and local contexts.

*D) Contexts shape local governance.* In this dissertation, it is presupposed that local governance variations are moulded by national and local contexts, in accordance to recent developments in local governance literature (Bevir et al., 2003; Bevir and Rhodes, 2003; Cole and John, 2001; John, 2001; and Le Gales, 2002). This thesis argues that in the studied Mexican municipalities, governance outcomes are



shaped by several variables in the local and national contexts. Among these, the political party in office, the way networks operate, and the policy issue are especially important. In this thesis, this set of conditions is considered the independent variable for the analysis.

The following chapter introduces the subject of context by describing the contours of Mexican local governance.

## Chapter Two

### The contours of local governance in Mexico

#### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that the understandings of sub-national governance have gradually incorporated local and national contexts into analyses that seek to explain variations in patterns of governance. Comparative studies between European and other western industrialised countries show that they share similar trends regarding the inclusion of non-governmental actors in policy-making and implementation, the substitution of traditional governmental instruments of control, and the resulting problems in securing accountability to the state (Cole and John, 2001). These shared tendencies have similarities among them, but they are not exactly the same in all countries (*ibid.*). The most recent contributions to the literature on sub-national governance argue that the differences are explained not only by the variations in the configuration of inter-organizational networks, as the original argument of Rhodes (1997) suggests, but also by variables that describe the medium in which these networks interact, like political and procedural cultures, the structure of government, and the customary modes of government-society relations (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003; Gaster, 2002; John, 2001; and Le Gales, 2002). Consequently, if governance can be theoretically identified by a “flexible pattern of public decision-making based on loose networks of individuals” (John, 2001: 9), the particular modalities that this flexible pattern takes are the matter of empirical research.



This chapter is an initial consideration of the Mexican context. It argues that, in recent years, local political arenas in Mexico have experienced a rise in the implementation of NPM criteria, in the electoral fragmentation of municipal governments and the citizens' partisanship, and in the number of actors (both governmental and non-governmental) participating in the policy process. As a result, traditional methods of policy-making and implementation have begun to be replaced by others based on flexible networks of governmental officials and citizens, which will be treated in detail in the following chapters. This change, however, has not taken place uniformly, but in a highly uneven way, varying among municipalities and even among different policy sectors within the same local government. This unevenness, which amounts to a partial 'shift' to governance, is related to structural conditions of Mexican municipalities, such as their rural or urban quality, the bureaucratic organisation of local government, and federal policies that have made social participation a requirement to receive transfers. Following chapters will elaborate and qualify this assertion, analysing mainly local conditions, and comparing them with the variations of governance patterns in the three studied municipalities.

The chapter begins with a brief description of Mexican municipality's performance, and the unevenness of the conditions under which it must work. This is followed by a section on traditional traits of Mexican local governments, which are mostly the result of a municipal system designed to ensure the prevalence of a single political party. Finally, there is an analysis of the emergent trends of local governance that have become especially evident since the second half of the 1990s, when the partisan alternation in municipal and state governments became significant.

### **Municipal unevenness**

One of the salient characteristics of Mexican municipalities is that despite having a common constitutional status, which gives them equal responsibilities and legal instruments to deal with the provision of public services, their actual performance and the conditions in which it is carried out vary greatly.

Mexico is a federal republic with three levels of government. There are 31 states and one Federal District (Mexico City), which are jointly called 'federal entities' (*entidad federativa*). Federal entities are divided into local governments. Municipalities are the states' local governments, while the Federal District has *delegaciones* instead (literally 'delegated governments'). *Delegaciones*, unlike municipalities, do not have City Councils made up by aldermen, and until recently, their chiefs were directly appointed by the Federal District's governor<sup>2</sup>. The country has a power division that follows the model of the United States, with elected executives (president, governors, mayors and chiefs of *delegaciones*) and legislatures (there are two federal chambers, one of deputies and another of senators, and 32 local congresses, one in each federal

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<sup>2</sup> The dissertation focuses on municipalities rather than on *delegaciones*. The main justification for this selection is that the 16 *delegaciones* are exceptional, especially if one considers the pace of their democratic consolidation and their funding system. Municipalities differ greatly in their capacities to produce partisan alternation in office. They possess, however, a well-established tradition of electoral competition and its institutions. Even if one argues that these institutions became really operational until the recognition of opposition local governments became the standard, still there is a decade's gap between municipalities and *delegaciones*, for the latter's first direct elections occurred until 2000. The funding systems are also different. Federal agencies directly financed the Federal District's public services until the mid 1990s, when the process of decentralisation, which had begun in the states a decade earlier, gained speed in the capital. However, this process has not reached the level found in the states. For example, education services, which can consume up to 50 per cent of the states' budgets, are still fully funded by the federal government in the *delegaciones*. In addition, they display significant characteristics, like a relationship with the Federal District's governor inclined towards administration (as opposed to politics), and a lower dependence on federal transfers, which make them exceptional local governments.



entity). There is also a supreme court (appointed by the president, ratified by the senate) and 32 high courts, one for each federal entity.

The 2,435 municipalities of the country share electoral, funding, and constitutional conditions in general; they, however, display a considerable variety in everything else. If the Federal District is excluded, the state of Baja California has the most populated local governments, with an average of 497,473 inhabitants per municipality (although most of them are actually concentrated in Tijuana). The state of Oaxaca, on the other hand, has 570 municipalities with an average population of 6,033 inhabitants each. Regarding their territory, the largest municipalities belong to Baja California Sur, with an average of 14,735 Km<sup>2</sup>, while Tlaxcala has 60 municipalities with an average of 65 square kilometres each (see table 6). The dissertation argues that there are common governance trends in urban municipalities, but the scale of the problems they have to face varies significantly according to the basic conditions of population and territory.

**Table 6. States with the smallest and largest municipalities in averages of population and size**

State	Number of municipalities	Average size of municipality in square kilometres	Average of population per municipality*
Baja California	5	14,023	497,473
Baja California Sur	5	14,735	84,808
Tlaxcala	60	65	16,044
Oaxaca	570	167	6,033

Source: INAFED (2004). \*The population is for 2000.

Differences related to population and territory are accompanied by socio-economic ones. Among the municipalities we can find cases like Metepec (state of Mexico), Cuernavaca (Morelos), San Pedro Garza García, San Nicolás de los Garza (Nuevo León), Santa María del Tule (Oaxaca), and four *delegaciones* of Mexico City (Benito

Juárez, Coyoacán, Miguel Hidalgo, and Tlalpan) that have indicators of education, health, and income per capita similar to those of European countries (UNDP, 2004). In the particular case of Benito Juárez, these indicators are as good as those of similar areas in Germany, Italy, New Zealand, and Spain (*ibid.*). By the same token, the municipalities of Sitalá, Santiago el Pinar, Aldama (Chiapas), Metlatónoc (Guerrero), Coicoyán de las Flores, San Simón Zahuatlán, Santa Lucía Miahuatlán, Santa María la Asunción (Oaxaca), Tehuipango, and Mixtla de Altamirano (Veracruz), have human development indexes comparable with those of Sub-Saharan African countries (*ibid.*). Between these two extremes, there are more than two thousand municipalities with a great variety of socio-economic conditions. These have shaped a multiplicity of patterns of interaction between government and society, ranging from some cases of high governmental fragmentation and the implementation of NPM criteria (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2003), to very traditional governments, almost totally dependent on federal transfers and with strong clientelistic patterns of interaction with citizens (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996). NPM in general is composed of different policies based on a preference of managerial approaches over political ones, the appraisal for efficiency in administration, the proliferation of more autonomous governmental agencies, the emphasis on outputs, targets, and monetary incentives for bureaucrats, and a public service delivery that considers citizens as clients (Bevir et al., 2003). Mexican style NPM, as it is explained below, shows many of these qualities found in western industrialised countries.

Within this framework of diversity, Mexican local government as a whole shows functioning patterns that are uneven, and in some aspects deficient. A municipal survey, conducted in 2002, shows that most local governments in the country do not



have adequate administrative systems. 60 per cent lack a department specialised in the supervision of expenses (*Oficialía Mayor*); 75 per cent of mayors estimate that in a typical year they collect less than 75 per cent of the planned local taxes; in 17 per cent of the municipalities there is not a single computer; and almost half of them accomplish less than 75 per cent of their planned public works (Cabrero–Mendoza, 2003). Given that in Mexico there is not a local civil service, the previous experience in public posts can be an advantage for local administrations. However, half of the mayors lack such experience, as local government's appointments are usually seen as the first stage of a politician's career. In addition, almost 30 per cent of municipal staff has remained less than a year in their posts, at any point of the three-year government period (*ibid.*).

According to the same survey, only 80 per cent of Mexican municipalities actually submit a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) to their respective local congress, despite that in most states this is a legal requirement in order to be entitled to state transfers. A MDP sets the priorities for the three-year administration, establishing its strategic objectives, and how they fit the respective State Development Plan. Moreover, only 20 per cent of the municipalities have introduced planning regulations (*ibid.*). Having internal regulations controlling the mechanisms to define and adjust the objectives of the MDP is usually an indication of citizens' formal involvement in planning (cf. Cabrero–Mendoza et al., 2001). If this is the case, then eight out of ten municipalities in Mexico conduct consultations to citizens, if they do at all, in an informal way, without necessarily opening up the process of construction of policy.

As Cabrero–Mendoza (2003a) argues, in most municipalities local officials take policy decisions by themselves, using a technical or administrative approach limited to what is considered possible in a three-year period, and following the directives of other levels of government. Most mayors' priority is to provide good public services, and to do so by obtaining the greatest amount possible in state and federal transfers (Cabrero–Mendoza, 2003). Maintaining a system of policy-making and implementation based on the interaction with networks does not appear to be among the main concerns of most local officials. In many aspects, the Mexican municipality is closer to a governmental paradigm of policy-making than to one of governance. Much of the municipal unevenness described here is related to variations in the initial socio-economic and geographical conditions under which governments must work, and to the difficulty to accomplish their mandates using traditional governmental instruments.

### **Traditional traits of Mexican municipalities**

The performance of local governments is explained not only by the aforementioned conditions, but also by the existence of a political system designed to ensure the hegemony of a single party.

Once the revolution initiated in 1910 came to an end, the main winning military and political elites formed an alliance with the intention of ensuring certain level of economic and political stability. In 1929, these groups founded the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) in order to control the access to public office of generals, military officers, and politicians, the majority of which were veterans of the



revolution. As Camp (1996) argues, the objective of the PNR was not to contend for political power in elections, but rather to maintain it in the hands of the influential faction from the state of Sonora, which led the project of transforming the revolutionary theses into a functional government. The PNR changed its name and structure in 1938 in order to accommodate the labour unions and the formalised corporatist relations with workers, peasants, bureaucrats and the military (Morris, 1995). The Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM), as it was then called, changed again its name in 1946, when it became the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). This transformation signalled the exit of the military from the structure of the party and the shift to a competition for the presidency among purely civilian PRI's blocs.

The PRI, as its name suggests, aimed at continuing the social transformations introduced by the revolutionary movement, allowing elections in the three levels of government, but reducing real competition to its minimum. The result was a hegemonic, semi-authoritarian system that generated an institutionalised corporatist order that, nevertheless, had the capacity of adapting to the needs of the president in turn. Continuity was ensured by the disproportionate constitutional and extra-legal capacities of the president, who is the centre of the political life in Mexico. Presidentialism has deteriorated in recent years by balances introduced by a plural federal congress, various state governments controlled by the opposition, and by the president himself, after the first opposition presidency was inaugurated in 2000. Nonetheless, in the period between 1929 and 1997, the PRI's organisation won every presidential election, the majority of state and municipal governments, and almost all the seats in the federal and local congresses. It was not until 1989 that the first opposition state government was recognised (Baja California), and although there

had been opposition municipal governments prior to that year, there was not a significant number of them before the mid 1990s (cf. INAFED, 2004). The PRI lost its absolute majority in the chamber of deputies until 1997.

In this system, municipalities were considered the last piece of the political machinery that allowed the PRI to stay in power for seven decades. The pre-eminence of party politics, local presidentialism, and fiscal dependency from the federal government were instrumental to maintain PRI's control. In the following sections I analyse these traditional traits of the Mexican political system. These traits have begun to be transformed by the introduction of new governmental and non-governmental actors in decision-making processes; but on the whole, they can still be found in most municipalities.

#### *The pre-eminence of party politics*

One of the legacies of the hegemonic party system is the pre-eminence of partisan politics in municipal life. The official party's weight would normally show itself in two ways: the usage of local government's resources to reinforce PRI's influence over voters, and the establishment and conservation of clientelistic networks of citizens, where public services and other benefits were provided in exchange of political support. Given that local governments were at the bottom of the political pyramid that sustained PRI's hegemony, the administrative and technical requirements for the well functioning of municipalities occupied a subordinated place, unless their neglect caused problems in social tranquillity.



Cabrero–Mendoza (2003) has mentioned the importance of public services among the priorities of mayors at the present time; but this is a relatively new development, built upon the real possibility of partisan alternation in office. In the period of the PRI's highest influence, local political partisanship was instrumental in maintaining the social-political control required by Mexico City, or the corresponding state capital. Political control exerted through the party members, unions, affiliated commerce chambers and neighbourhood associations was a responsibility of both mayors and party officials. Local officials could also adopt a more direct approach, and use municipal resources to strengthen the support for the PRI in electoral times. In the case of Zacatecas City, for example, the chiefs of block (*Jefes de Manzana*) were used for this purpose as late as the 1980s and early 1990s. The chiefs of block are semi-official representatives of the municipality, elected by the inhabitants of each block, which promote compliance with municipal regulations (e.g. garbage collection and recycling, the registration of newly born children within the legal time limit in the Civil Registry, and the application to military service admission by all men of 18 years old or more). As the election approached, chiefs of block promoted the vote among their neighbours, in favour of the PRI<sup>3</sup>. Similar partisan usage of the municipal resources has been found in the region of Orizaba (Osegueda, 2000), the northern states in the late 1980s (Espinoza–Valle, 2000), and other parts of the country.

Municipalities maintained clientelistic networks especially with the lower socio-economic strata, which were more likely to reside in poor neighbourhoods with basic public services of low quality or even without them, despite the legal obligation of local governments to provide them. This created a favourable situation for

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<sup>3</sup> Goytia–Robles, P. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

bargaining that could be mutually beneficial for citizens and local officials; neighbourhood associations affiliated to the PRI could ensure a fast track treatment in solving their needs, and municipal officials could secure attendance to the party's rallies, or even votes (Loaeza, 1993). This politics-over-administration approach is at the root of the typical scepticism of local politicians, who usually interpret the decisions of other party's governments as efforts to benefit only social groups that can give them political backing<sup>4</sup>.

Having said that, it is important to note that it is not my intention to argue that the government-governed interactions in Mexican municipalities have consisted of solely clientelistic exchanges. Davis (1989, 1994) has found evidence that suggests that Mexican local governments have tried to avoid political clientelism when possible, following administrative priorities instead of partisan ones, even before the PRI began to loose local elections in significant numbers. Rodríguez and Ward (1994) argue in the same line, pointing at the irrelevance of PRI's ideology in shaping local policies and, therefore, making a case of administration-over-politics in some areas of municipal life. The influence of the PRI officials over municipal life and policy, however, was real, although it can be accepted that the degree of its control was variable.

Sosa and Velasco (1999) and the same Rodríguez and Ward (1994) describe the traditional process through which mayors were selected: federal deputies submitted the names of possible candidates for the municipalities in their districts to the governor. The governor, once he had chosen among them, presented the names to

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<sup>4</sup> Trueba-Gracián, T. Personal Interview. Orizaba. 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998.



the PRI municipal committees. The committees usually accepted them after some bargaining, and the local representatives of the three sectors of the party (workers, peasants, and the 'people') acceded not to present alternative pre-candidates. At a time when the PRI ordinarily won, these local internal partisan decisions were in fact an appointment process conducted by state authorities. Nevertheless, the party had the power to place militants in key posts of the municipal administration, and in this way, influence policy-making<sup>5</sup>.

The tangled nature of many municipality-PRI relationships produced an over-politicisation of local life. As Loaeza (1993) argues, elections were helpful to ratify the PRI's position as representative of social interests, but day-to-day legitimacy was constructed by direct appeals to partisan and municipal officials who were seen as dispensers of services and benefits that, in spite of often being public services, were not accessible to all citizens. In addition, the short government periods, and the legal prohibition of the consecutive re-election of mayors and aldermen ensure a campaign environment to renovate the City Council in full every three years. These conditions have produced the traditional volatility of Mexican municipal life. Everything is oriented towards the urgent, to what is achievable in the three-year period of a municipal government. The PRI's corporatist structure ensured some stability in patronage and clientelistic networks, although once the decline of corporatism gathered speed in the country, clientelistic networks establish and reorganize themselves more rapidly, changing from government to government (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2003a).

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<sup>5</sup> Cruz – Arellano, E. Personal Interview. Orizaba. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001.

### *Local presidentialism*

Subordination to party directives was, in part, the manifestation of the president's central position in the Mexican political system. The mayor's status in the local sphere mirrors the president's prominence in the country, for mayors continue to be at the centre of municipal politics, above other City Council members, and most of them remain a key node in municipal policy networks.

Mexican presidentialism is, basically, the dominance of the president over other branches and levels of government (Camp, 1996). As it was mentioned above, this functional superiority is maintained through the use of political devices, like formal and informal regulations that limit political competition and manoeuvre space for other national and sub-national authorities. Espinoza–Valle (2000), however, rightly points out that presidentialism has been sustained also by regulations that secure the president's right to intervene in local matters (political and otherwise), and through the control of the distribution process of transfers. In the period when the president held an uncontested authority over most policy issues in the country, it was not possible to explain local political dynamisms without his restrictive presence, or that of the federal agencies (Espinoza–Valle, 2000a).

In spite of the frequent criticisms to presidentialism made by current local officials, the municipality's structure and regular functioning have produced local versions of it. Mayors consolidated their importance after the 1983 and 1999 constitutional amendments. The one occurred in 1983 changed the article 115, assigning to municipalities, for the first time, the right to collect taxes and to constitute



themselves as public service providers; a role traditionally performed by state and federal agencies. The 1999 amendment explicitly declared municipalities as an ‘order of government’, recognising their right to issue regulations and to design policies independently from the state and federal governments. As these changes began to be implemented, municipalities increased their bureaucracy’s size and became more expensive institutions, attracting the attention of tax-payers (Guillén–López, 2001). The mayor has been at the centre of this revitalisation, but not necessarily because his/her leadership has secured social backup in all cases.

Mayors are at the centre of municipal political life because electoral and functioning rules produce weak City Councils, as it is explained below. The mayor is elected with his/her trustee [*síndico*] and the aldermen [*regidores*] in a single slate. Trustees’ main function is to serve as legal representatives of the municipality and to substitute the mayor when he/she is out of the city. The trustee’s usual duties comprise the supervision of all agreements and contracts signed by the municipality (if they are not binding for more than three years, in which case they must be approved by the City Council), and the authorisation of the day-to-day expenses to run the municipal bureaucracy (Estado de Veracruz–Llave, 2002). Aldermen, on the other hand, are the representatives of the municipality’s inhabitants, although they do not have a specific constituency defined by neighbourhoods. They are the more numerous members of the City Council, and are in charge of approving general budgets, the MDP, expenditure reports, and the appointment of the General Secretary and the Treasurer of the municipality. They also have supervisory functions over their respective policy areas, being able to audit administrative and technical staff (*ibid.*). The City Council consists of the mayor, the trustee (or trustees in some states), and the aldermen. The

municipality's General Secretary and Treasurer ordinarily participate in City Council meetings, but without voting rights.

Parties put forward candidates to the City Council in a list that establishes an order of precedence: the first name of the slate is the candidate to mayor, the second to trustee, and the following to aldermen. This order cannot be changed once the slate is registered in the corresponding state electoral institute. If the state allows only elections based on proportional representation, then the winning party obtains the mayor, the trustee, and the majority of aldermen. The rest of City Council seats are assigned to the parties that obtained the second and third highest proportion of votes.

The states have different criteria to establish representation in the City Council. Veracruz and Zacatecas (the states to which the municipalities of Orizaba and Zacatecas City belong, respectively) decide on the number of aldermen proportionally to population. Veracruz assigns three aldermen for municipalities of less than 20,000 inhabitants, and increases the number progressively up to 15 for those municipalities with more than 250,000 residents (Estado de Veracruz-Llave, 2002). The trustees are determined according to the number of aldermen, but the rules are applied in an *ad hoc* basis: Orizaba, with 118,593 inhabitants in 2000, could qualify for up to four trustees because its City Council has 12 aldermen (INAFED, 2002). However, the local congress approved only one. Zacatecas applies a similar rule, with a minimum of six aldermen for municipalities of less than 15,000 inhabitants, and a maximum of 12 for those with populations greater than 100,000 (Estado de Zacatecas, 2002). Zacatecas City, however, has 20 aldermen as an



exception, given that it is the capital of the state. Finally, in Guanajuato (the state to which León belongs), the legislature divided all municipalities in three echelons (according to population and economic importance) and assigned a fixed number of aldermen (Estado de Guanajuato, 2002). Thus León, with 1,134,842 residents in 2000 has only 12 aldermen in total (INAFED, 2002) (see table 7). In addition to this disproportional ratio between population and City Council seats, the latter are assigned without any reference to specific territorial districts. In this way, despite that aldermen are supposed to represent a given number of citizens, there is not a formal constituency to which he/she is accountable for his/her voting records. This, additionally to the rule of non-immediate re-election, does not stimulate the establishment of relations seeking the accountability of politicians to citizens.

**Table 7. Members of municipal governments in the selected case studies, according to political party\***

	<b>León (2000-2003)</b>	<b>Orizaba (2001 – 2004)</b>	<b>Zacatecas (1998 – 2001)</b>
Mayor	PAN (1)	PRI (1)	PRD (1)
Trustees	PAN (2)	PRI (1)	PRD (1)
Aldermen elected by majority	PAN (8)	0	PRD (12)
Aldermen elected by proportional representation	PRI (3) Other (1)	PRI (4) PAN (4) PRD (1) PVEM (1) Other (2)	PAN (4) PRI (2) PT (1) Other (1)
Total number of City Council members	15	14	22
Population**	1,134,842	118,593	123,899
Number of inhabitants per City Council member	75,656.13	8,470.92	5,631.77

Source: data from INAFED (2002). **Notes.** \* The number of City Council members is given between brackets after the acronym of the corresponding political party. PVEM is the

Green-Ecologist Party of Mexico and PT the Labour Party. \*\* The population corresponds to the year 2000.

The City Council [*Cabildo*] is the highest governing body of the municipality and the mayor is its president and convenor; but because most of its members are aldermen, a post that in the Spanish colonial administration involved representation and defence of trade guild interests, the City Council is intended to check and counterbalance the mayor's power (Rodríguez-Banda, 1999). Nevertheless, most states allow the winning party to have enough votes in the City Council to approve the ordinary decisions made by the mayor without the necessity of negotiating with opposition aldermen. This is the case in León and Zacatecas, where the mayor can easily obtain the necessary votes to run the municipality. On the other hand, given that the winning margin of the PRI in Orizaba was small, the mayor of that city must persuade two opposition aldermen to meet the required majority. The aldermen's impartiality in voting, however, is not guaranteed. Given that aldermen are not accountable to a specific population, and that immediate re-election is not permitted, political careers depend on the support of the mayor and party officials (Guillén-López, 1996). Aldermen of the same party of the mayor tend to vote in favour of his/her proposals, for their political careers might depend on the mayor's recommendation for other posts, mostly administrative, in the following administration. The mayor's approval can also be decisive for obtaining a candidacy for a local congress seat. Voting against the mayor is usually seen as disloyal, especially among aldermen of the same party, but also among opposition ones, if the issue over which a vote is held is considered in the interest of the entire municipality (Guillén-López, 1998).



In addition, the way the City Council works allows a certain freedom of choice that reinforces the mayor's position. The basic government process begins with the proposal of the MDP, the Annual Operative Plans (AOPs), and the general budgets. These documents are prepared by the different directors of department and approved by the City Council. Once approved, aldermen establish commissions, which are in charge of supervising the work carried out by the mayor and the departmental directors. Once the fiscal year is finished, departmental directors prepare expenses reports that are approved by the City Council, and submitted to the local congress (Estado de Guanajuato, 2002; Estado de Veracruz – Llave, 2002; Estado de Zacatecas, 2002).

Aldermen, however, have more autonomy regarding procedures than it seems at first approach. Orizaba, for example, elected its first opposition government in 1994, and the new aldermen and directors lacked previous governmental experience. In that administration, the distinction between the directors' (operative) functions and the aldermen's (supervisory) was not respected. Aldermen in charge of commissions were also involved in the operative details of the day-to-day services, and in the final supervision of expenses<sup>6</sup>. This is certainly not usual; but it is revealing that the situation was not corrected by the legislature because the local congress cannot pay detailed attention to procedural malpractice in all 210 municipalities of the state of Veracruz. In this particular case, the City Council's powers to check the mayor were substantially diminished because the aldermen became directly involved in the implementation of policies. Having no formal constituency, aldermen are accountable only to other aldermen and to the local congress, which rarely

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<sup>6</sup> Briseño, F. Personal Interview. Orizaba. 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998.

intervenes. In this environment, it is usual that the already important position of the mayor is strengthened even more.

### *Financial dependency*

Other traditional trait of Mexican municipalities is their dependence on transfers from the federal government. Basically, municipalities do not have enough local revenue to run administrations, which has implications in the degree of autonomy for local policy design. In order to function, municipalities must receive more than 60 per cent of their income from other levels of government; but a considerable amount of them are earmarked for specific public services and are closely supervised by local congresses. This diminishes budgetary manoeuvre space, which in its turn reduces the possibility for innovation and improvement in public services not considered in the federal assignments (Zarzosa, 1999). As late as the mid 1990s, there were indications that transfers could follow a partisan logic, benefiting PRI's state governments above opposition ones (Porrás, 1998). This section elaborates on the general conditions of municipal financial dependence, which created the conditions for such political use of funds.

In essence, municipal revenue is formed by local income, transfers, and tax collection made on behalf of other levels of government or agencies. The main single source of municipal local revenue is taxes, especially the estate tax [*impuesto predial*]. In addition to this, Municipalities charge 'profits' [*aprovechamientos*], which include fines and late payment surcharges; 'rights' [*derechos*] that are fees for administrative and other municipal services, including potable water and garbage collection fees; and



‘products’ [*productos*], mainly income from leasing or selling municipal properties (INEGI, 1998). In addition, a recent source of local revenue is the ‘contributions for improvements’ [*contribución de mejoras*]. These are the fees that directly benefited persons have to pay to the municipality for the introduction of public service infrastructure. They are usually charged in monthly instalments, and complement the federal and state funding for the public work (INEGI, 2001).

The main source for overall municipal funding is the transfers from federal government. They are decentralised funds, administered and audited by local congresses, which include the ‘branches’ [*ramos*] 28 and 33 of the federal expenses budget (INEGI, 2002). Municipalities also collect money for third parties (usually federal agencies related to social security services). Despite that these funds have to be transferred afterwards, municipalities usually benefit from the collection of interests while they are kept in their bank accounts (see table 8).

Local income, in general, has become less important with time. Tax collection was diminishing until the constitutional amendment was fully implemented in 1984, when it rose significantly (it went from 6.08 to 10.62 per cent of total income). The benefits of the new legal and administrative capabilities of municipalities are evident from 1987 onwards, when tax income began to rise consistently until it peaked in 1992 (20.39 per cent of total income). This can be explained because many municipalities did not have the administrative infrastructure (including computers and updated databases) to collect taxes efficiently, and their acquisition required time. The most benefited local governments were large urban municipalities, which between 1975 and 1992 increased their tax collection in 441 per cent. In the same

period, rural municipalities augmented their tax collection in 50 per cent (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999: 37). Since 1992, however, taxes have declined in relevance (reaching 9.57 per cent in 2002).

As table 8 indicates, the contributions for improvements are not significant in the overall structure of municipal income as well (they reached 0.39 per cent in 2002). The descent from 0.69 per cent obtained in 1997 suggests that other authors are right when arguing that the model of co-financing public services, analysed in chapter four, has reached its exhaustion point (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2003a). Contributions for improvements cannot grow much given that their collection depends on the uneven performance of neighbourhood committees, analysed in the following chapters. These contributions, however, are important because they are an indication of the establishment of networks as a method of public service delivery. The descent in the relative importance of local income can be easily seen in chart one.

Before 1983 municipalities were more self-sufficient, but they also were less expensive to run. As Guillén-López (1996) argues, before 1983 municipalities were considered representatives of state capitals, almost like local branches of state and federal governmental agencies. As a result, in 1980 and 1981, income for third parties reached 21.24 and 18.31 per cent respectively. This money was mainly the payment for local services provided by the respective state. In 1982 and 1983, these funds (normally transferred to the state capital) were devolved to municipalities. That explains the 'for third parties' income fall from 18.31 to 4.69 per cent in 1981–1982 and from 4.69 to 0.36 per cent in 1982–1983.



**Table 8. Municipalities' revenue, 1980 – 2002 (percentages)**

Year	Local taxes	Citizens' contributions for the introduction of public services	Other local income*	Federal and state transfers	For third parties	Public debt	Availabilities+
1980	12.24		32.77	26.31	21.24	2.40	5.03
1981	10.13		33.41	29.33	18.31	3.06	5.76
1982	8.49		34.75	45.77	4.69	3.07	3.23
1983	6.08		24.73	64.37	0.36	2.87	1.58
1984	10.62		19.93	59.13	0.78	4.24	5.30
1985	12.12		22.20	57.08	1.46	4.50	2.64
1986	11.43		21.39	59.42	1.21	5.30	1.25
1987	10.84		22.19	57.29	1.26	5.53	2.88
1988	11.05		20.76	58.05	3.35	3.77	3.02
1989	12.95		23.92	50.99	2.38	6.42	3.34
1990	16.84		20.90	48.08	7.04	5.95	1.19
1991	17.65		22.31	47.11	4.94	5.18	2.81
1992	20.39		20.50	47.88	4.37	4.50	2.36
1993	19.66		19.53	44.37	4.65	8.04	3.75
1994	18.07		19.53	47.35	4.40	8.40	2.25
1995	17.30	0.65	17.41	51.89	2.56	6.66	3.53
1996	14.77	0.68	17.14	58.23	1.24	6.44	1.50
1997	13.76	0.69	17.07	59.78	2.35	4.23	2.12
1998	11.16	0.52	18.01	62.20	2.39	3.37	2.35
1999	9.38	0.46	16.15	66.28	1.65	3.04	3.04
2000	9.39	0.47	13.73	68.72	1.78	2.16	3.75
2001	9.47	0.39	13.95	69.11	0.71	2.92	3.45
2002	9.57	0.39	13.30	68.09	0.58	4.41	3.66

Sources: own calculations from data in INEGI 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2002, and 2005. The table does not consider figures for the Federal District. **Notes.** \***Other local income** includes profits, rights, products, and other income from 1995 onwards. +**Availabilities** are the unspent funds from the previous fiscal year. It also includes *Cuentas de Orden*, i. e., in-the-books income, like unpaid debts to the municipality.

Regarding municipalities' expenses, administrative costs are the most important item.

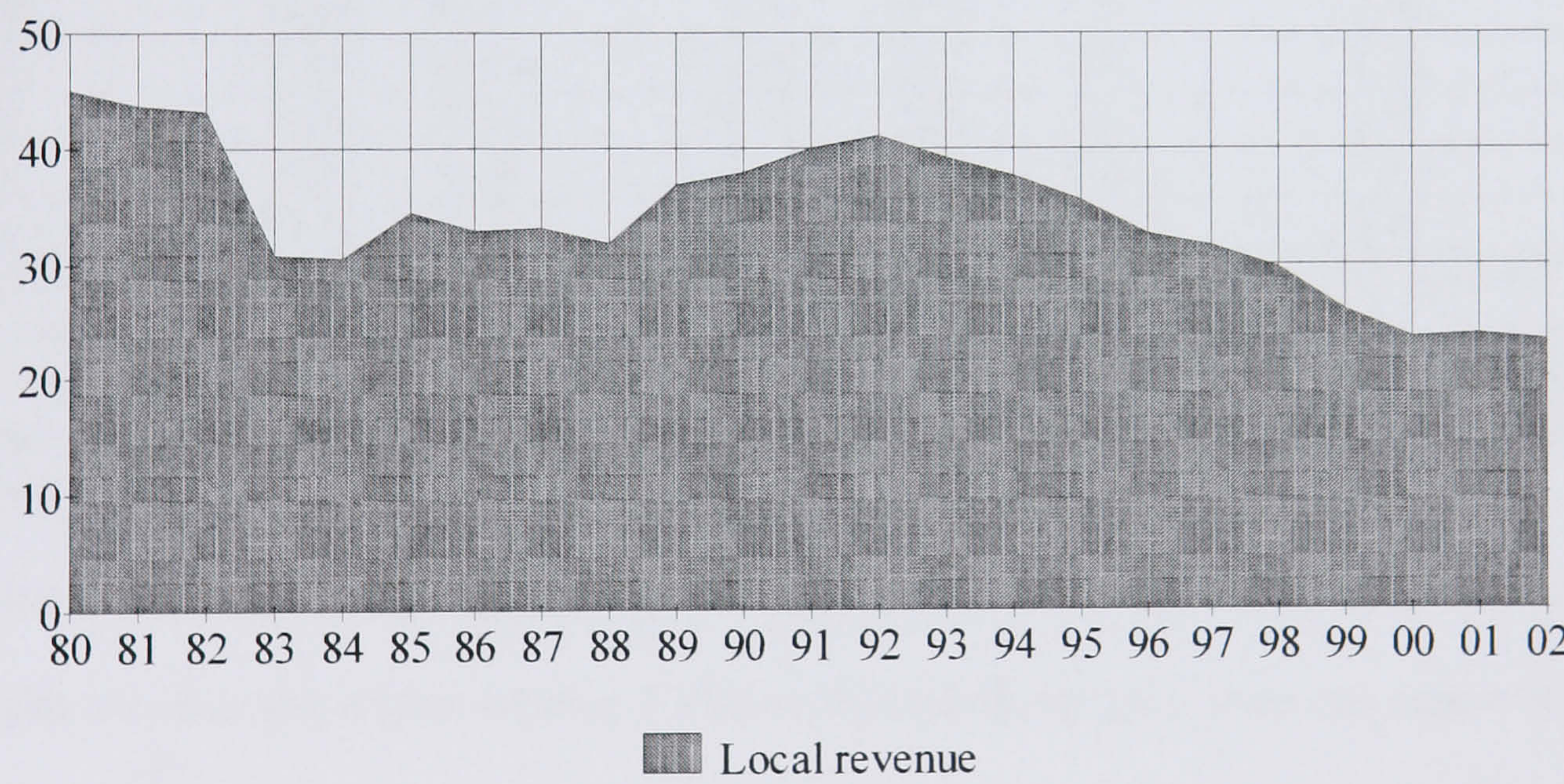
In the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, administrative expenses usually represented between 50 and 60 per cent of municipal budgets. It was not until 1997 that their share began to decrease, mainly because the increment of public works' expenses and devolutions to state and federal governments (see table 9).

Administrative costs usually comprise salaries, bonuses, travel expenses of local



politicians and staff, office supplies, outsourcing services, and the acquisition or lease of properties for office use (INEGI, 2001). This high proportion of the budget is partly explained by the above-average salaries of politicians and mid and top level staff, who unlike other countries, are usually employed on a full-time basis<sup>7</sup>. Public works [*obras públicas y fomento*], on the other hand, comprise the building and maintenance of the municipality's facilities, roads, schools, hospitals, irrigation systems, and urban infrastructure, including potable water, public lighting, paving, and sewers (INEGI, 2001). On average, administrative and public works combined use more than 80 per cent of municipal budgets.

**Chart 1. Local revenue of municipalities, 1980–2002 (percentage of total revenue)**



Source: data from table 8. Local revenue includes all sources of revenue excluding state and federal transfers, income for third parties, public debt and availabilities.

<sup>7</sup> The only exception in Mexico is the ‘usage and custom’ municipal governments, which employ traditional indigenous forms of government in rural communities (CEDEMUN, 2002). Most of these traditional appointments are *ad honorem* or receive only basic allowances.



Table 9. Municipalities' expenditure, 1980-2002 (percentages)

Year	Administrative expenses	Public works	Transfers to other levels of government	For third parties	Public debt	Availabilities	Other
1980	58.56	23.24	3.64		6.54		8.02
1981	56.91	28.60	3.50		4.92		6.07
1982	60.79	27.77	3.57		3.09		4.78
1983	57.48	30.31	2.97		4.14		5.09
1984	50.97	33.64	3.35		3.91		8.13
1985	54.57	32.92	4.58		4.33		3.60
1986	59.87	28.45	4.40		3.67		3.61
1987	56.69	24.68	4.65		4.18		9.80
1988	56.38	25.41	5.64		4.49		8.07
1989	57.74	25.58	6.26		3.89		6.53
1990	55.93	27.23	6.48		3.61		6.75
1991	56.18	25.64	7.17		3.73		7.28
1992	56.13	24.61	7.28		3.68		8.30
1993	57.74	24.86	5.97		4.19		7.24
1994	57.25	24.09	6.12		4.80		7.74
1995	58.92	20.76	6.56	2.07	6.28	5.41	
1996	60.67	20.56	6.40	2.49	5.64	4.24	
1997	59.11	21.29	6.43	3.49	5.11	4.57	
1998	52.40	23.83	9.26	3.73	4.27	6.50	
1999	49.94	28.15	10.08	2.40	3.31	6.12	
2000	49.28	27.00	12.55	2.35	3.22	5.59	
2001	50.24	32.89	5.24	0.96	2.72	7.95	
2002	49.45	33.50	4.97	0.20	3.62	8.26	

Sources: own calculations from data in INEGI 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2002 and 2005. The table does not consider figures for the Federal District. **Notes:** transfers in this context are fund devolutions to state and federal governments. **Other** expenses include 'for third parties' and 'availabilities' expenses (from 1980 to 1994). Afterwards they are reported separately.

If the municipalities were to be left to their own revenue resources, they would not be able to meet these basic expenses. Financial dependency *per se* does not equate to political dependency from federal government, but there is an instinctive reluctance among local practitioners to agree to the increasing weight of transfers (they reached 68.09 per cent of municipal income in 2002), given the discretionary way in which they used to be allocated in the past. As Escalante–Macín (2000) points out, before 1998 the federal government distributed transfers in an *ad hoc* basis, establishing annual agreements with the federal entities using criteria that considered population,

development indexes, growth rates, and participation in the production of the state's GDP, but that still allowed many discretionary decisions of the president. Between 1975 and 1992, for example, transfers to municipalities grew considerably, but the distribution was acutely unequal, benefiting especially urban municipalities. In this 17-year period, transfers to large urban municipalities (with income between 50 and 100 million pesos) grew more than 23 times, while rural municipalities (with an income below 5 million pesos) received only an increase of 60 per cent (Cabrero–Mendoza, 1999: 37). The regulations for assigning transfer amounts are now published on a regular basis, and discretionary agreements have decreased substantially since the second half of the 1990s (Escalante–Macín, 2000).

In the 1980s, when municipalities were confronted with a considerably enlarged mandate financed by federal government, the prevalent political discourse focused on the perils of dependency, and the possible unjustified influence of other levels of government in the recently gained autonomy (Martínez–Assad and Ziccardi, 1988). This political discourse assumed that the advantages of a greater self-government could only be secured if they were accompanied by fiscal autonomy<sup>8</sup>. When present mayors talk about fiscal dependency they focus on the implications, and possible difficulties, when having to cohabitate with governors of a different political party. In the period of the PRI's hegemony, opposition municipalities regularly experienced problems in obtaining federal and state funding for their programmes (Escalante–Macín, 2000). As late as the mid 1990s, local politicians presupposed that the discretionary power of governors was still considerable, sufficient to obstruct

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<sup>8</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal Interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



projects of opposition municipalities that required state transfers, and that typically were intended to establish a degree of difference with traditional PRI's governments<sup>9</sup>.

However, this is a characteristic that is fading rapidly. Once it was evident that transfers are now made under explicit rules, enforced by local congresses, mayors began to emphasise the importance of co-ordination with state capitals, and the development of lobbying approaches to the problem of financial dependency. Municipal associations have augmented their presence in the federal and local congresses in order to influence legislatures' decisions, especially since 1998, when the branch 33 transfers became decentralised<sup>10</sup>. While in the 1980s the Mexican municipalities' position was evaluated as caught "between society and state" (Martínez-Assad and Ziccardi, 1987: 287), the current perception is closer to one of co-governance, where different levels of government work simultaneously in order to achieve governability. Financial dependency is regarded now as another of the variables that the mayor must have in mind in order to deal with the new conditions of governance<sup>11</sup>.

### **Emergent trends**

Over-politicisation of municipal life, presidentialism, and financial dependency were instrumental in maintaining the hegemony of the PRI and a system of closed policy-processes, with predominantly governmental and corporate actors defining them. From the early 1990s, however, Mexican municipalities began to experience a

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<sup>9</sup> Escudero –Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

significant change in their general situation. The federal government increased the speed of services' decentralisation to the states, accompanying it with a growing flow of transfers distributed using clearer rules. Partisan alternation in sub-national governments became a permanent feature of the political system, which introduced the notion of a partisan differential not only in electoral discourse, but also in the exercise of government. This, in its turn, highlighted the need to improve public services' quality through a more technical approach to the cities' problems. Given that the PRI can lose elections now, public services turned into one of the main issues to evaluate a municipal government and, therefore, to increase or decrease the chances for a party re-election (Cabrero–Mendoza, 1995). Political fragmentation and the reduction of the traditional legitimacy of unions and partisan structures compelled local politicians to innovate in policy-making and implementation (Cabrero–Mendoza, 2004). In addition to this, lack of resources, and the increment of balances to supervise municipal performance have augmented the number of actors in the policy process.

As a result, policy-making and implementation are more open now than in the past. There has been a move to what Cabrero–Mendoza (2000a: 82) calls *co-gestión*, which can be loosely translated as 'co-attainment'. Non-governmental actors are now an integral part of policy-making and implementation in many municipalities, participating in traditional consultation processes, like surveys and referenda, but also having co-operative, decisional, and evaluative functions, through neighbourhood committees, NGOs co-delivering public services, and professional associations in shared programmes (ibid.). It is true that there are policy areas that are more adequate than others for citizens' participation. Technical complexity puts some



limits over the influence of non-governmental positions. Nevertheless, the mere presence of this kind of societal actors, and the interaction between programmes' beneficiaries, authorities, and technical experts, has brought in a qualitative change to traditional policy-making (Cabrero–Mendoza, 2003b).

Interestingly, many of these qualitative changes were implemented first in opposition (non-PRI) governments. In order to consolidate an alternative model of government, opposition municipalities sought autonomy from their respective governors through a more intensive use of local and transfer regulations (Guillén–López, 1999a). As the seminal works of Cabrero–Mendoza (1996) and Ziccardi (1995) show, by the mid 1990s the most important innovations came from opposition governments that, seeking the conditions for a long-term government project, established local regulations and mastered the abilities to secure high transfer rates and, thus, funding. At the present time, innovation comes from governments of all parties, advancing in areas such as poverty reduction, housing, public health, and service delivery based on modern technologies, all of which were considered too complex for a municipal government just a decade ago (García del Castillo, 2004a). These changes are part of a Latin American trend towards the diversification of governmental areas of influence (Cabrero–Mendoza, 2003a); but they are also the result of a revalorisation of the municipality itself as part of a federal system, which is being revitalised in order to deal with the increased socio-political complexity of these years (Guillén–López, 1999).

Change is occurring, but at different speeds. Cabrero–Mendoza et al. (2001), Cabrero–Mendoza (2003a), and García del Castillo (2004) make a case for the

understanding of Mexico as the co-existence of various kinds of municipality, differentiated in their capacity to incorporate non-governmental actors in their policy processes. They range from rural traditional governments, almost totally dependent on federal transfers, to governments of metropolitan cities, with complex systems of social involvement in policy shaping (ibid.).

The following sections of the chapter elaborate on some of the emergent trends that have shaped this partial shift towards governance. In the first place, municipal governments have introduced NPM and technocratic criteria in order to depoliticise some aspects of local administration. Secondly, political fragmentation has counterbalanced local presidentialism by evidencing that the multiple partisan projects of government many times cannot be accomplished because structural limitations, and that the mayor himself is subject to 'power dependence'. Finally, the subordination to federal government, product of the financial dependence, has been moderated by the presence of a new array of actors that is the result of recent regulations on transfers.

#### *Technocratic rationality*

One of the side effects of the real possibility of party alternation within the City Council has been the introduction of NPM and technocratic models of government. Paradoxically, the presence of a number of eligible parties has depoliticised some areas of local administration which, in the past, involved an intense political activity but that now are seen as mainly technical. In the times when the municipality was a simple representative of the state agencies, obtaining good quality in public services



required negotiation with the state capital. Now that municipal agencies are in charge of services, solving a problem involves, in addition, technical expertise. Moreover, in an effort to reduce the instability in the quality of services that can result from the change of the directors of area every three years, some municipalities have implemented regulations that allow mid and top level staff to remain once the City Council members leave.

This trend is especially evident in successive administrations of the same party for, although mayors are free to follow or not their predecessors' policies, expensive projects can only be completed by a process of accumulation of coherent advances made in several government periods. Bazdresh–Parada (2002), Cabrero–Mendoza (1999b), Negrete (2002), and Santos–Zavala (1999), for example, show that the sophisticated model of social participation of León was actually constructed through at least three successive PAN administrations. The first introduced regulations and founded citizens' committees and councils, while the third established an autonomous planning institute that coordinates the work of these bodies. This has been possible because, in some areas, administrative and technical criteria have prevailed over purely political ones.

Subsequent to the analysis of a number of municipalities, Cabrero–Mendoza (2000a: 19-20) proposes a description of Mexican style NPM: 1) NPM is characterised by the perception that the ethos and efficiency of the market are not desirable but essential for the survival of any project of government. 2) Municipalities have multiplied the policy sectors in which they intervene and, as a result, their structures and general functioning have become more complex. Thus, it is not possible to conceptualise

municipal governments as a coherent whole, but it is necessary to differentiate according to municipal department, policy sector, and programme. 3) NPM incorporates non-governmental actors in the policy process in order to legitimise it and shape it according to citizens' needs (ibid.). After analysing 141 innovative municipal programmes that were submitted to the recently established *Gestión Local* 2002 prize, Cabrero–Mendoza (2003) argues that NPM is primarily present in large municipalities (100,000 inhabitants or more) and that, therefore, it is a basically urban phenomenon. Most innovations introduced in rural municipalities rely on basic administrative improvements that do not multiply or fragment their bureaucracies, and despite that some of them make use of citizens' networks in order to design or implement their policies, the largest and most sophisticated systems of social participation are found in metropolitan municipalities (ibid.).

NPM, with its technocratic approach, presupposes that effectiveness in administration and public service delivery should be at the centre of municipal functioning. Ward (1998) has identified changes carried out in some Mexican municipalities applying NPM principles. In the first place, party affiliation or ideological identification is no longer considered essential to be appointed to office. At the same time, more stability in technical posts and the appointment of officials based on technical expertise is widely practised in urban municipalities (Camp, 1996). Secondly, efficiency in financial management has grown, which has been a central campaign offer of the three main parties (PAN, PRI, and PRD) in recent years. This is also the result of both the need to collect taxes more efficiently and the requirement of local congresses to improve in anti-corruption measures. City Councils now are accountable to local congresses in all matters concerning the use of



earmarked transfers: they must be used in the specified amounts, in the particular services and neighbourhoods approved by the LFC. As it is analysed in the following chapters, Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas have implemented this kind of NPM changes, although in different degrees.

Ward (1998a) points out that this shift to a technocratic rationality has changed the traditional government model in Mexican municipalities; but it has done it in a differentiated way. Using an approach suggested in another place<sup>12</sup>, he designed a typology of Mexican municipalities based on technocratic rationality and PRI-style political partisanship. These variables are put in a basic strong/weak matrix, resulting in four models of local governance. After analysing a dozen municipalities in the north and the centre of the country, he classifies most of them in the two models of local governance in which technocratic influence is strong. Most of the governments where NPM influence is strong come from the PAN and the PRI, but there is also a government of the PRD. This confirms the observation of Guillén-López (1996), who argues that NPM began to be implemented in opposition municipalities, especially governments of the PAN in the northern states, but that now it is common in metropolitan and large municipalities of all parties. Technocratic changes have restrained the traditional over-politicisation of local government, introducing more stability and continuity in administration.

The most important consequence of NPM, however, lies in its effects over political clientelism. In the three studied municipalities, technocratic criteria are used to limit

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<sup>12</sup> The basic variables of Ward's model were suggested by Guillén-López (1996): 'administrative modernisation' and 'traditional politics'.

the requests of citizens' groups and neighbourhood associations, modifying the traditional patterns of networks' interactions. Mayors now argue that transfer and other regulations have constrained their manoeuvre space in managing public services and that, therefore, there has been a reduction of discretionary decisions in this area<sup>13</sup>.

### *Electoral fragmentation*

Electoral fragmentation has played a role in the modification of the traditional conditions of Mexican local government. Fragmentation defined as the proliferation of governmental agencies, and the resulting complication of interconnections among networks, is treated in chapter three. In this section, electoral 'fragmentation' refers simply to the breakdown of the PRI's hegemony in local elections, resulting in partisan alternation in a considerable number of City Councils.

The municipality was the first level of government to experience partisan alternation in Mexico. In 1946, the first of a series of post-electoral municipal conflicts took place, as a result of credible accusations of electoral fraud. The first non-PRI municipality was recognised by the government of San Luis Potosí state in 1958 (Martínez–Assad and Ziccardi, 1988); but the total number of opposition municipalities in the period between that year and the mid 1980s remained unimportant. The presence of this small number of opposition municipalities, however, was helpful in the validation of the PRI's vast majority of local governments, for it was usually mentioned as proof of the democratic character of

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<sup>13</sup> Goytia – Robles, P. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



the Mexican political system (Camp, 1996). Once the new Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE) was introduced in the early 1990s, partisan alternation became a distinct possibility for most municipalities. The COFIPE relocated the control of elections from the Interior Ministry to the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), an autonomous and a-partisan federal agency with branches in every federal entity. The ultimate evaluation of the elections' validity rests now in a council made up by citizens with an apolitical background. Disagreements are resolved in a section of the judiciary branch specialised in electoral regulations. In this way, in a 13-year period, the number of non-PRI local governments increased more than ten times (see table 10).

**Table 10. Number of opposition municipalities (selected years)\***

	1981	1986	1999
<b>Political Party</b>			
PAN	18	26	287
PRD	---	---	278
PARM	9	7	0
PPS	7	7	0
Other	7	18	42
Opposition municipalities in the country	<b>41</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>607</b>
<b>Total number of municipalities</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>2,419</b>

Source: Data from Martínez-Assad, and Ziccardi, 1988; and CEDEMUN 2001. **Notes.** Opposition municipalities are the non-PRI parties. \*The selected years are years without federal elections. The PRD figures are not available for 1981 and 1986 because it was founded until 1988 (PRD, 2000). PARM is the Authentic Mexican Revolution Party, and PPS is the Socialist People's Party. The table does not include 'usage and custom' governments.

If the partisan composition is seen in detail, a more complex picture appears. In one decade the PRI went from having almost nine out of 10 municipalities, to slightly more than one third. In 2004, the PRI held 36.18 per cent of municipalities, while the PAN had 18.15, and the PRD 9.90 per cent. Thus, while the PRI remains the most important party (both in number of municipalities and federal congress seats), there

has been a significant fragmentation of the political interest groups. In the 20-year period between 1981 and 2001, nine parties have been founded in addition to the PAN, PRI, and PRD. In the local elections of July 2003, 11 parties contended for congressional seats. Nevertheless, the PAN, PRI, and PRD remain the most influential parties in the current situation. Finally, it is important to note that alternation has taken place in an orderly manner. In 1995 there were 50 *Municipal Councils*, which indicates the number of municipalities that had irresolvable post-electoral problems. *Municipal Councils* [*Concejo* (sic) *Municipal*] are substituting City Councils appointed by the local congress when the corresponding state electoral institute annuls the results of an election in one municipality. This is usually the consequence of an important number of irregularities in the election day. In 2004 there were only five municipalities in this situation, which is a measure of both the reduction of post-electoral conflict and of the increased citizens' trust in electoral results (see tables 11 and 12).

**Table 11. Number of municipalities according to governing political party, 1994-2004**

Year	PAN	PRI	PRD	Other	Coalitions	Municipal Councils	Usage and Custom	Total
1994	101	2,128	84	37		42		2,392
1995	160	2,019	120	46		50		2,395
1996	224	1,544	179	49		10	406	2,412
1997	250	1,477	220	45		14	410	2,416
1998	307	1,359	288	50		12	403	2,419
1999	287	1,384	278	44	4	4	418	2,419
2000	312	1,377	247	52	11	10	418	2,427
2001	324	1,283	216	59	118	9	418	2,427
2002	374	1,149	206	156	125	2	418	2,430
2003	407	957	228	253	166	1	418	2,430
2004	442	881	241	293	155	5	418	2,435

Source: data in CEDEMUN (2001, 2002), and INAFED (2005a). **Notes.** **Other** parties include PT, PVEM, PRT, PARM, the Party of the *Cardenista* Front for National Reconstruction (PFCRN), the PPS, and other regional parties. **Coalitions** were introduced in 1999.



**Table 12. Percentage of municipalities according to governing political party, 1994 – 2004**

Year	PAN	PRI	PRD	Other	Coalitions	Municipal Councils	Usage and Custom	Total
1994	4.22	88.96	3.51	1.55		1.76		100
1995	6.68	84.30	5.01	1.92		2.09		100
1996	9.29	64.01	7.42	2.03		0.41	16.83	100
1997	10.35	61.13	9.11	1.86		0.58	16.97	100
1998	12.69	56.18	11.91	2.07		0.50	16.65	100
1999	11.86	57.21	11.49	1.82	0.17	0.17	17.28	100
2000	12.86	56.74	10.18	2.14	0.45	0.41	17.22	100
2001	13.35	52.86	8.90	2.43	4.86	0.37	17.22	100
2002	15.39	47.28	8.48	6.42	5.14	0.08	17.20	100
2003	16.75	39.38	9.38	10.41	6.83	0.04	17.20	100
2004	18.15	36.18	9.90	12.03	6.37	0.21	17.17	100

Source: Data from table 11.

As Espinoza–Valle (2000) argues, once opposition local governments began to be systematically recognised, elections became the focal point of political life. However, effective electoral democracy did not immediately undermined presidentialism. In the particular case of Baja California, Espinoza-Valle argues that the recognition of the first opposition state government was actually a confirmation of the meta-legal attributions of the president, who decided to apply ‘selective democracy’ criteria, recognising PAN victories but not the ones of the PRD, in exchange of the former party’s support in the federal congress. Aziz-Nassif and Sánchez (2003a) are right when they argue that presidentialism has been restricted in the medium term by alternation. The presence of governments with alternative projects to that of the president has promoted a fuller use of the sub-national governments’ prerogatives, stimulating the emergence of balances to the presidency. There is evidence that Mexican federalism is being revitalised because the federal government has begun to weaken with regard to the states. The relation with the municipalities has yet to be

transformed, yet they will play a greater role in the overall political system if this tendency continues (Gibbins, 2001).

Alternation has also prompted the reassessment of municipalities' real capacity to produce significant changes in a single government period. For 20 years, opposition parties concentrated in bettering the electoral system in order to compete with the PRI in level circumstances. Now that alternation is a fact, parties are shifting their attention to more effective government models (Aziz–Nassif, 1996a). In this sense, it appears that the problem of Mexican democracy is not to secure fair elections, as it was one and a half decades ago, but how to consolidate the municipal institutions and make them more responsive to a party's project of government (Aziz–Nassif, 2003). In order to do that, municipalities have begun establishing horizontal policy-sharing networks. Innovative policies are advertised and promoted in municipal associations, congressional commissions, and through academic activities. The cases of the PAN and PRD are the most noteworthy, for the programmes applied in many of their municipalities have been designed in a small number of local governments, like Tijuana and León for the case of the PAN<sup>14</sup>, and Xico (Veracruz) and Mexico City for the PRD<sup>15</sup>.

#### *Incorporation of new actors*

Financial dependency from federal government is unlikely to change in the near future. However, the criteria used for transfers' allocation have become more

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<sup>14</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview. Orizaba. 12<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Pérez – Franco, A. Personal interview. Mexico City. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005.



transparent with time and, in an effort to depoliticise them, the first federal legislature without a PRI majority issued new regulations that require the incorporation of non-governmental actors to the policy process. The regulations do not specify the particular modality of this incorporation, which has allowed a certain degree of innovative policy-making based on networks. The particular forms that this partial shift to governance has taken are analysed in chapter four.

The first Law of Fiscal Coordination (LFC) to explicitly state the criteria and formulae to assign transfers was implemented in 1998, by the first Chamber of Deputies to have an opposition majority. As Buira (1998: 186) explains, from that year on it was enough to look at the text of the LFC to calculate the approximate amount of transfers to be received by a state government. Transfers are made

directly to state governments through one transparent formula. The states in turn will propose a formula for sharing these funds with municipalities. The public will know exactly the amount of transfers to state and municipal governments, and for the first time it will be able to hold the municipalities and the state governments accountable for their use (*ibid.*).

Buira overstates the actual transparency derived from the publication of formulae whose exact results are difficult to replicate<sup>16</sup>. However, once the procedure to obtain transfers is published, municipal associations lobby state governments and congresses for the most beneficial interpretation of the LFC of that year (Gutiérrez-

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<sup>16</sup> Bassols, M. Personal communication. Mexico City. February 1999.

González, 2001). Bodies like the Association of Mexican Municipalities (AMMAC) and the Heriberto Jara Centre of Municipal Services (CESEM), which have members in most states of the country, publish manuals and organise courses to deal with the annual process of transfers' negotiation and administration. The negotiations, despite of being conducted through these associations, usually represent the interests of their most important members, like state capitals<sup>17</sup>. Lobbying has produced the revitalisation of the political discourse on federalism; but, unlike the discourse produced in the 1980s based on fiscal autonomy, the 'new federalism' discourse emphasises the mutual co-dependence and the possibilities to fund public works through innovative arrangements. This has produced, at local level, a scheme of tripartite funding in which federal agencies, municipalities, and citizens participate.

The revival of the federalist discourse has also promoted lobbying through governors (Ward and Rodríguez, 1999). Pressing the different states' cases has not excluded public demonstrations of disagreement about transfers' amounts. In the case of Zacatecas, for example, the PRD governor organised a series of protest marches in Mexico City, including a caravan that drove the 500 Km to the capital, because the federal government did not give his state enough funds to complete an important motorway. Despite that only 10 of the 57 municipalities of Zacatecas belonged to the PRD, all of them participated in the protests –which took place in the year 2000<sup>18</sup>. Similar disagreements have occurred in other states, including some constitutional controversies presented in the Supreme Court of Justice.

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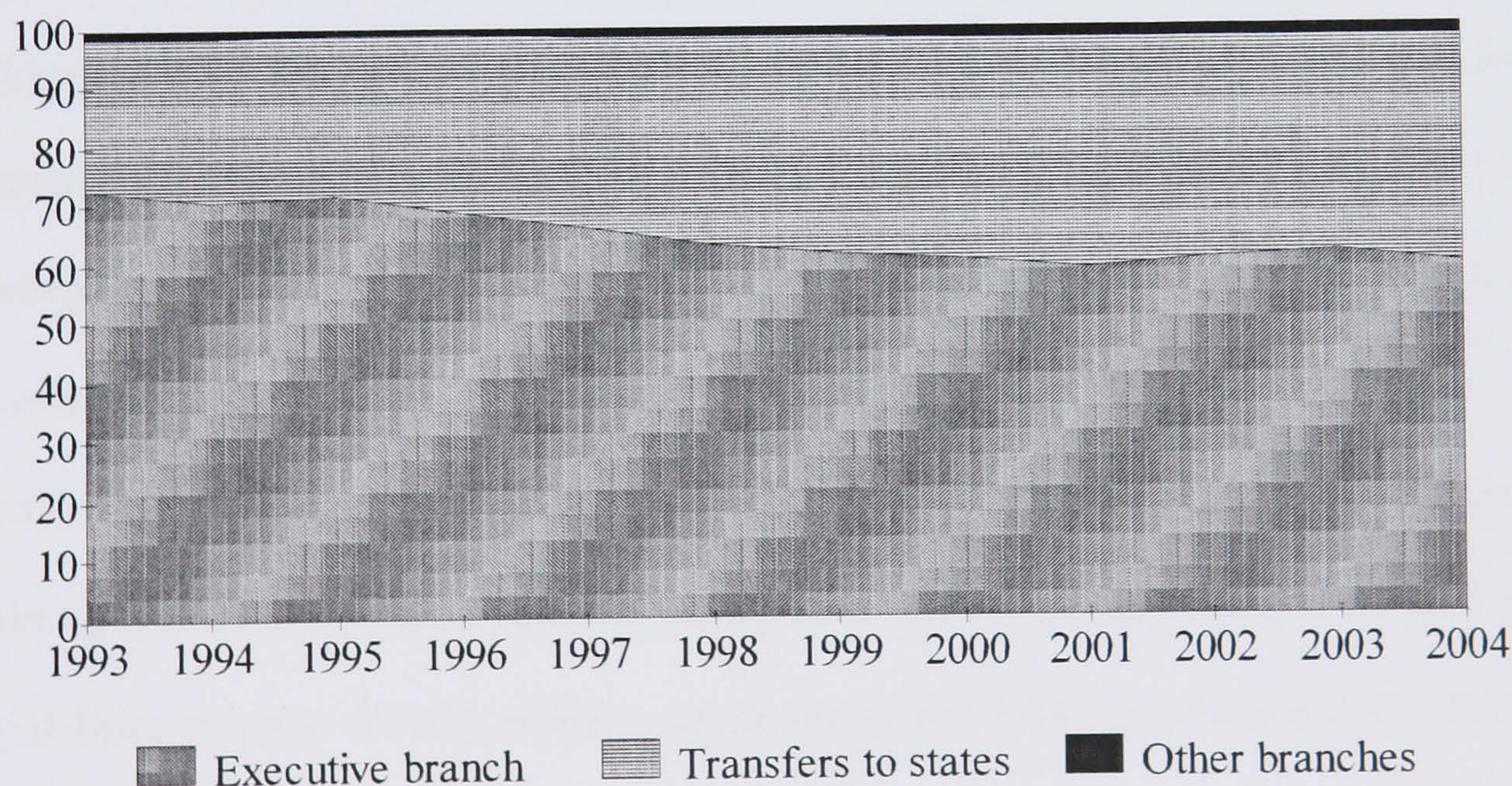
<sup>17</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Medina – Lizalde, J. L. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



This kind of behaviour is relatively new, and is a sign of increased interdependence among governmental actors of different levels and agencies (Ward and Rodríguez, 1999). As a consequence, federal government has developed more consensus-seeking policies than in the past, because state administrations have become real balances in some policy areas. Municipalities, however, can bypass their governor if they consider him/her to be inefficient. This direct lobbying is not well received in all states<sup>19</sup>, but its mere existence has established patterns of non-hierarchical (but formal) exchanges among different actors in the governmental structure. These new patterns of interaction between sub-national governments explain in part the constant rise in transfers to the states, and the reduction of the federal executive's budget (see chart 2).

**Chart 2. Structure of federal government's expenditure, 1993-2004 (percentages)**



Source: own calculations on data in Presidencia de la República (2002, 2004). **Notes.** **Transfers** comprise funds assigned to states, the federal district, and municipalities; **other branches** include the legislative and judicial (federal) branches of government, the IFE, and the National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH).

<sup>19</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal Interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



At the centre of the lobbying processes are the branches 28 and 33 of the federal expenses annual budget. Branch 28 funds [called *participaciones*] are the main part of federal transfers. They are redistributions of federal government's tax income, given to the states without any conditions about the way to be used, but under the supervision of the federal and local congresses (Patrón, 1999). The formulae published in the LFC vary slightly from year to year, but usually consider the population, in absolute numbers, the amounts of federal tax collected in the territory, and the change in poverty indicators, in order to determine the appropriate distribution coefficient (Campos–Orozco, and Lazos–García, 2001). In practical terms, the Federal District, and the states of Mexico, Veracruz, Jalisco, Nuevo León, and Tabasco receive almost half of the branch 28 funds given their concentration of population and economic activities.

Branch 33 funds [called *aportaciones*] get more attention from local officials despite being earmarked by federal government. *Aportaciones* are intended to cover public infrastructure investment and public service provision, the second expenses' item in municipalities. Funding these policy areas with federal transfers leaves more spare resources (mainly branch 28 funds and local income) for administrative expenses. Branch 33 comprises seven funds: (I) the Fund for Basic Education and Teachers' Training (FAEB); (II) the Fund for Health Services (FASSA); (III) the Fund for Social Infrastructure (FAIS), which is made up by the FAIS for states and the FAIS for municipalities; (IV) the Fund for the Strengthening of Municipalities (FORTAMUN); (V) the Fund for Multiple Contributions (FAM); (VI) the Fund for Public Safety (FASP); and (VII) the Fund for Technological and Adult Education (FAETA) (Presidencia de la República, 2002). All but the municipal FAIS and



FORTAMUN are directly used by state governments, and include provisions for administrative expenses, governmental employees' salaries and social security payments<sup>20</sup>.

Municipalities spend their share of FAIS and FORTAMUN directly. FAIS (also known as *fund three*) is distributed following four criteria: a) population earning less than two minimum wages, b) population of 15 years (or older) that does not read nor write in Spanish, c) population living in houses without sewers, and d) population living in houses without electricity supply (Patrón, 1999). In this way, poorer states and municipalities receive higher transfers of FAIS. The municipal FAIS can only be used in direct expenses to introduce or give maintenance to potable water systems, sewers, pavements and roads, the introduction of electricity to poor neighbourhoods or rural areas, basic health and education infrastructure (mainly municipal hospitals and schools facilities), drainage systems, and agriculture-related infrastructure (Campos-Orozco, and Lazos–García, 2001).

FORTAMUN (also known as *fund four*) is designed to help municipalities to pay their debt service and invest in their police forces (mainly by the purchasing of expensive equipment) (Presidencia de la República, 2002). It can also be used in specific acquisitions generally made only once (e.g. renovating the fleet of police cars)<sup>21</sup>. Both the municipal FAIS and FORTAMUN use a relevant percentage of the branch 33

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<sup>20</sup> FAEB and FAETA are used for the running of elementary, technological, and adult-education schools, including the maintenance of infrastructure, salaries, and bonuses for teachers. FASSA is only for medical infrastructure and personnel; FAM is employed mainly in food supplements for elementary school children and population in situation of poverty, and the maintenance and reconstruction of schools' and universities' facilities; finally, FASP funds prisons, police forces, and public safety programmes (Presidencia de la República, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Goytia – Robles, P. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

total funds, ranging from a combined 13.84 per cent in 1998 to 16.55 per cent in 2004 (see table 13).

**Table 13. Structure of the branch 33 funds, 1998-2004 (percentages.)**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Branch 33 Funds</b>							
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Fund for Basic Education and Teachers' Training (FAEB)	69.74	64.06	63.70	60.88	61.67	56.90	57.73
Fund for Health Services (FASSA)	12.07	11.96	12.10	12.60	12.24	12.19	12.59
Fund for Social Infrastructure (FAIS), which is formed by:	9.07	9.16	8.91	9.55	9.96	8.74	8.69
FAIS for states	1.10	1.11	1.08	1.16	1.21	1.06	1.05
FAIS for municipalities	7.97	8.05	7.83	8.39	8.75	7.68	7.64
Fund for the Strengthening of Municipalities (FORTAMUN)	5.87	8.61	8.37	9.79	10.21	8.95	8.91
Fund for Multiple Contributions (FAM)	3.24	3.00	2.90	3.11	3.24	2.32	1.29
Fund for Public Safety (FASP)		3.10	2.88	2.77	1.37	0.98	0.92
Fund for Technological and Adult Education (FAETA)		0.10	1.14	1.30	1.31	1.18	1.18

Sources: own calculations on data in Presidencia de la República (2001), Escalante-Macín (2000), Cámara de Diputados (2000, 2002), and INAFED 2005. **Notes.** FORTAMUN included the Federal District in 1998, 2003 and 2004. In all the remainder cases it is excluded. FASP and FAETA were created in 1999.

The LFC obliges municipalities to use FAIS and FORTAMUN in specific services and, at the same time, to organise citizens' consultations in order to legitimise the funds' particular use. Municipalities have to inform residents about the public works financed with the branch 33, their cost, their objectives and beneficiaries (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 2002a: art. 33 I). Mayors also have to include benefited citizens in the planning, execution, control, and final assessment of the funds' expenses (ibid: art. 33 II); all this supervised by local congresses. In this way, local governments are dependent on citizens' participation in order to get the *aportaciones*. This change is important, for it goes beyond the usual approach of the 'democratic planning' system implemented in the 1980s, which was based on the use of discussion-tables where municipal officials listened to citizens' participations on the city's needs.



The LFC requirements, and the need to establish a party differential in the first opposition local administrations, prompted the implementation of varied forms of citizens' consultation, although in the end only some variants were adopted extensively (Ceja-Martínez, 2002). Among them, neighbourhood committees, citizens' planning councils, independent planning institutes, and open City Council meetings are the most common. Some of these bodies have limited budgeting capacities, and in some states their decisions bind the City Council. They are described in detail in the following chapters. Here suffices to indicate that these innovative ways to make policy have introduced governance dynamisms that stand out against traditional governmental practices.

Financial dependency and increased supervision from local congresses have made local political systems more intricate than in the past. Citizens' participation and consultation devices limit mayors' manoeuvre space regarding public service policies. If in the 1980s it was enough for mayors to pay attention to state capitals, now they have to consider federal and local congressmen and networks of citizens required by the branch 33 regulations. In general, municipalities need more consensus building than in the past in order to be governed. They have grown more complex in the last decade, making them an appropriate environment to test some key founding assumptions of governance literature.

## **Conclusions**

The traditional model of Mexican local government is going through a process of transformation. The introduction of NPM in some municipalities, and its implied

technocratic rationality, has modified the customary pre-eminence of partisan politics in the design and implementation of policies. This shift has been motivated by the combined needs to solve increasingly complex urban problems, and to offer alternative governing models once City Councils' seats began to be secured by non-PRI parties. Partisan alternation has been determinant in the establishment of innovative strategies for problem solving and policy-making. It has fragmented the political landscape of local government, making it more complex at the same time. Finally, federal regulations designed to depoliticise the process of transfers' allocation has increased the number of actors that must participate in some policy sectors.

The increase in lobbying practices with other levels of government ('upwards'), and the requirement of citizens' consultations ('downwards') are symptoms of the dispersal of the traditional loci of power. While in the past the presidentialist system emphasised top-down modes of hierarchical control, the revival of the federalist discourse, the decentralisation policies, and the increase of governors' relevance have introduced new balances to the presidential power. Municipalities have been benefited in the process, for they have obtained legal and fiscal capacities that have regained them a central place in local politics. This, however, has come at a price: City Councils now must deal with governors and the state agencies, but also with local and federal congresses, federal agencies, and an array of non-governmental actors in their day-to-day functioning.

Municipal associations, and the formation of trans-state blocs of municipalities sharing successful programmes, denote the presence of horizontal networks that modify traditional patterns of interaction. In addition, since municipal and state



governments have acquired a central role in policy definition, they are regarded as the responsible actors for policy results. In this way, it has been increasingly evident that the municipalities' performance is of primary concern to governors, regardless of their political party. The traditional top-down hierarchies are now being complemented with top-down dependencies and a revalorisation of bottom-up processes.

These changes, however, have taken place in an uneven way. In general, urban municipalities are more capable of benefiting from the new transfer regulations than their rural counterparts. Innovative approaches to problem solving are constrained by a bureaucratic structure that allows the pre-eminence of the mayor and, therefore, it secures a place of influence for his/her governing style. Additionally, federal regulations require social consultations, but allow a considerable manoeuvre space for City Councils in deciding the particular means to enact this requirement. As a result, the mentioned process of transformation has been partial, affecting more some municipalities than others, and leaving some policy sectors untouched. It is certain that the transformation process has introduced new actors in policy-making, creating new interdependencies, and opening up procedures that in the past were controlled by the hegemonic party system; but this shift has been patchy.

Some Mexican municipalities have begun to show governance dynamisms in some policy areas. In the particular case of local governments implementing sophisticated systems of citizen participation, and the maintenance of networks for policy-making in public services financed with branch 33 funds, the image is that of an 'overcrowded state' in the expression of Cole and John (2001). The increased

number of actors relevant to policy processes, and the use of alternative, non-hierarchical, ways to legitimise policy are traits of governance (John, 2001).

The following chapters will qualify this assertion, arguing that this partial shift to local governance has taken particular forms according to local and other conditions. Chapters three, four, and five analyse the three studied municipalities (Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas) according to some general qualities proposed by governance understandings as features of governance.



## Chapter Three

### Fragmentation and local governance

#### Introduction

As it is explained in the conclusion of chapter one, this dissertation considers government and governance not as a dichotomy of social-political orders, but as different paradigms of policy-making and implementation that involve dissimilar patterns of interaction between government and society. Governance patterns, as John (2001) argues, are characterised by flexible policy-making and implementation based on networks of institutions and individuals. The interaction patterns of governance are both the cause and the result of a medium in which fragmentation of governmental and non-governmental bodies, blurredness between the public and private spheres of action, and self-organisation among non-governmental actors are higher than what is usually found in hierarchical interactions. However, the particular forms of government-society relations generated by this policy-making paradigm are shaped by context and, therefore, can only be established *a posteriori* through empirical research.

In chapter two, I argued that Mexican municipalities have experienced a partial and uneven shift from traditional governmental patterns of functioning, and interaction with society, to local governance ones. This change has been prompted by the inclusion of new governmental and non-governmental actors in some local policy processes, which is the result of partisan alternation in City Councils, the presence of new balances to presidential power, and innovative transfer regulations. This patchy

‘government to governance shift’ is especially evident in some public service areas, where a relatively flexible way of policy-making and implementation based on networks has been introduced.

This chapter brings together the conclusions of the two preceding chapters to analyse the particular forms of local governance in the cases of study. It focuses primarily on some dimensions of bureaucratic and societal fragmentation which, according to the reviewed literature, are salient attributes of governance. In order to do this, this chapter analyses three complementing strategies implemented by the studied municipalities. The first one is the proliferation of bureaucratic agencies and the resulting fragmentation of policy areas. The second is the tendency of municipal administrations to deal directly with individual citizens rather than with social organisations, avoiding in this way the social, partisan, or union intermediaries that were usual in the times of the PRI’s hegemony. The third is the leadership of the mayor. This chapter argues that local governments in Mexico have implemented policies that benefit from, but also seek to reinforce, a certain degree of bureaucratic and societal fragmentation in order to strengthen their political centrality.

The studied municipalities (León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas) have fragmented their structures and engaged in direct government-to-citizen interactions in different degrees. In the three cases, however, bureaucratic and societal fragmentation has been used to ratify the mayor’s leadership within the bureaucratic structure, and his/her position as chief public service provider. In this sense, the mayors of León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas counter the undesired effects of fragmentation by developing strong leadership styles, which are necessary to generate more coalition-oriented



politics, as John (2001) argues. These three local administrations are especially interesting given that they belong to states that by the mid-1990s were considered ‘political laboratories’ where the model of the dominant party was in crisis, and alternative governing styles were emerging (Aziz-Nassif, 1996a). The chapter begins with a theoretical consideration of fragmentation, and continues with some sections about how it is verified in the three analysed municipalities. The conclusion raises some issues regarding the level of fragmentation in León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas, and the role of the corresponding political party in office.

### **Governance and fragmentation**

The concept of fragmentation plays an important role in most governance understandings. Its importance stems from the fact that fragmentation, both in its governmental and societal forms, has been one of the most influential factors in the transformation of traditional patterns of interaction between the state and society. In general, governance theoretical frameworks presuppose understandings of fragmentation that can be summarised in two basic approaches. Excluding the definitions of fragmentation as the state’s territorial breaking-up (e.g. Okafor, 2000), and its related issues of international recognition and the legitimacy of the central authorities vis-à-vis sub-national regions (e.g. García-Guadilla, Rodríguez-Vázquez, and Álvarez-Itriago, 2002), fragmentation in the literature of sub-national governance is typically understood either as the proliferation of autonomous governmental agencies, or as the process of their hybridisation.

The first approach considers fragmentation as the combined effect of the atomisation, or proliferation, of governmental agencies and their increased autonomy from central authorities to define policy. This understanding usually refers to the dispersal of *loci* of power within public administrative structures in order to gain in flexibility, diversity, and quickness of governmental responses, and the associated problems of lack of co-ordination and policy-coherence among governmental departments. The atomisation and proliferation of agencies are part of the governmental answer to the perceived inadequacies of traditional bureaucratic structures and procedures, for these,

organised as they have been around professional disciplines and functional departments, are increasingly found to be too rigid and too inflexible to respond adequately to the complex problems and policy issues that cut across the boundaries and divisions between the vertical organisational skyscrapers of most public services (Benington, 2001: 214).

The insufficiencies of traditional public administration to address multi-level, cross-sectoral issues restrict the governmental capacities to adapt to new situations. This, in turn, increases the probability of excluding citizens from access to public services when their particular situations do not conform to the administrative or procedural boundaries of governmental action. Governments, trying to avoid these legitimacy-damaging situations, have reacted generating an approach based on the specialisation of policy sectors, expanding the scope of governmental responsibility to matters that were unthinkable 30 years ago, but concentrating the agencies' interventions on



“rather narrow boundaries of [ a ] particular ‘sub-arena’ or ‘specialised policy arena’”  
(Campbell, Baskin, Baumgartner and Halpern, 1989: 86).

Fragmentation defined from this standpoint implies a higher degree of operational autonomy from central control in policy-making, implementation, and assessment in the interest of having a more effective correlation between governmental resources and citizens’ needs (Pierre and Peters, 2000). Western industrialised countries have fragmented their structures in order to meet their citizens’ heterogeneous demands more efficiently, matching specific requirements of societal groups with the responses of special-purpose bodies that interact with them in a more direct way (John, 2001; Le Gales, 2002). In the process, governments increase their legitimacy and, ideally, their ability to construct consensus in the community, for the distance between policy designer and user is shortened (Marks, 1996). Fragmentation can be seen as an adaptation process to conditions of more societal complexity caused by the dis-integration of the traditional sources of legitimate representation, such as the political parties, unions, or government itself (Pierre and Peters, 2000). Thus, fragmentation increases a very much needed governmental flexibility, which is required to interact in a socio-political system in constant change.

Ashby (1956: 206- 215) has argued the same for any kind of organisation that intends to influence other actors in order to maintain a certain outcome constant. The “Law of Requisite Variety”, as he calls it, postulates that if an individual or organisational regulator aims to steer a system, it must match the system’s constant change. Adaptation to the external environment necessitates that some components in the regulator’s behaviour are variable enough to respond to the emergent conditions

without endangering the regulator's preservation. Consequently, the requisite variety is met in the difficult balance between the need for flexibility, diversity, and dispersed decision-making, on the one hand, and the essential minimum of policy-coherence that limits the centrifugal tendencies of fragmentation, on the other (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1998).

Is in this delicate balance where fragmentation as an adaptation strategy has its main disadvantage. Fragmentation complicates governing processes because it generates power dependencies that accentuate the tensions between agencies and different levels of government, testing central government's capacities to co-ordinate and generate policy-coherence (Rhodes, 1997). Pierre and Peters (2000) presuppose a concept of fragmentation in this line of argument when they conceive the government-governance 'continuum' as a collection of segmented policy sectors whose orientation cannot be defined by a single executive directive. Fragmentation augments when decentralisation, localisation, and devolution policies increase the agencies' legal capabilities and resources. The resulting, more numerous, bodies may have similar powers in their respective policy areas and, by being more autonomous from central authorities, they can produce interactions that do not follow the top-down logic (Genschel, 1997). In their turn, these conditions may generate overlapping policy sectors and redundancy in programmes (Turner and Hulme, 1997).

Peters (1995: 18) finds fragmentation problematic for the same reasons. Fragmentation is present when government maintains a "nominal control" over agencies, but in practical terms these develop "policy stances of their own" that



disperse and obstruct hierarchical exchanges. Fragmented governments are “centrifugal”, with *loci* of power dispersing in varying degrees and speeds within its structure (Pierre, 2000a: 242). This dispersion of power brings in new non-hierarchical, non-vertical IGR, which makes straightforward top-down control more difficult (Rhodes, 1997). This “horizontality” among governmental agencies may cause them to favour non-hierarchical interactions over top-down lines of command (Peters 1998a: 296).

Other complications stem from the rise in numbers of significant actors in the policy process, which may modify the usual governing patterns and change the balances that make consensus and negotiation possible (Pierre, 1995). Consensus and negotiation are more expensive in financial, political, and social terms when dealing with more numerous and segmented actors (Peters, 1997a). The problem lies in the intrinsic difficulty of having to deal with additional actors, and in the fact that governmental processes are made possible by standardisation, and fragmentation increases their heterogeneity (Rhodes, 2000). Clearly, interaction with more distinct interest groups, considered as potential political clients, demands from government an approach differentiated by the specific problems of the involved public service and target population, which is more expensive than the traditional provision of public services on a ‘one-size-fits-all’ basis. In sum, in fragmented bureaucracies, atomisation and increased autonomy make them “less controllable than more integrated administrative systems” (Peters, 1995: 35). In the light of these disadvantages, fragmentation defined as an adaptation strategy can only make sense as a trade off for increased legitimacy.

The second definition of fragmentation used by the national and sub-national understandings of governance is related to the augmented influence of public-private policy networks, and the resultant hybridisation of the instruments employed by governments to steer. This approach understands fragmentation as the process by which heterogeneous societal actors and “spheres of action” mix together generating “hybrid frameworks of participation” (Mlinar, 1995: 145). It assumes proliferation of agencies or interest groups, their increased autonomy, and a set of resulting non-hierarchical interactions, but on a *public-private* basis; i.e. the resulting fragmented units are made up by both governmental and non-governmental institutions and individuals. Kooiman (1993a), Marks et al. (1996), Rhodes (1997), and Wilson (1998) have introduced this understanding of fragmentation as an important trait of local governance. Most notably, Rhodes (1997, 2000) proposes a governance understanding (that of the management of inter-organizational networks) that is practically indistinguishable from fragmentation defined in this way. The increased fragmentation in governance is apparent by the rising number of governments that implement ‘contracting out’ policies (Rhodes, 1994), introduce public-private ‘special purpose bodies’ that bypass the usual functioning channels of local government (Rhodes, 2000), and generate different kinds of public-private partnerships (Rhodes, 1995). As a result, both government’s and society’s roles appear to be less monolithic than what was thought in the past, with multiple possible combinations between them.



*Participation and mayoral leadership*

The two aforesaid conceptions of fragmentation imply a significant change in what is expected from citizens' participation in its interaction with government. Part of the innovation of the understandings of sub-national governance lies in a certain notion of 'active citizenship' that is required in order to complement, or even replace, some aspects of governmental interventions (Le Gales and John, 1997). If, ultimately, governments fragment their structure and functioning to be more responsive to citizens' desires, and in this way improve public service delivery, it is necessary to have individuals willing to engage with governmental officials and programmes in order to provide the required information and resources to define or implement policy (Blair, 2000). The actual performance of citizens in this aspect varies greatly, and in the case of British and European local governments, schemes of consultation and participation, if indeed citizens participate at all, have not necessarily benefited the direct users of services and their representatives in city councils (Needham, 2002). Nevertheless, the assumption of certain 'consumer responsiveness' is characteristic of the literature on sub-national governance, being this a feature where the argued difference between the paradigms of government and governance is more evident. The traditional paradigm of public administration seems to imply a notion of participation rather restricted, with the emphasis put on consultation processes and tax-related obligations, while governance patterns of interaction have introduced numerous variants of participative mechanisms.

Both 'active citizenship' and governmental fragmentation are trends that governance understandings argue to be present in the European 'shift to governance'. However,

in the cities where these tendencies have generated trans-sectoral economic and political dynamisms that have been successfully transformed into collective projects, 'active citizenship' and governmental fragmentation have been complemented by the presence of influential leaders capable of reducing the unwanted effects of the proliferation of agencies and the citizens' direct interactions with government. Le Gales (2002: 264) argues that European cities have consolidated their places as "sites of governance" because they have managed to maintain their privileged position as *loci* of decision-making despite the increased fragmentation in both governments and societies. This, however, has been made possible in part by the enhanced role of the leadership of the urban elites, especially mayors with enlarged mandates and the legitimacy that results from being directly elected by citizens (*ibid.*).

Genschel (1997) argues that increased fragmentation does not necessarily entail a clear-cut and proportional reduction in the steering capabilities of regulators. Analysing the case of the telecommunications industry, he notices that as fragmentation increased in the industry's medium of action, regulators usually deployed unconventional mechanisms, mostly reliant on innovative governing styles, in order to influence emerging networks of more autonomous actors. In other words, increased fragmentation appears to call for augmented leadership constructed on a non-hierarchical, non-traditional, basis. In the same line of argument, John (2001), Le Gales (2002), and Le Gales and John (1997), offer examples that show the importance of the role of the mayor, and of the regional authorities, in securing convergence over European cities' policies. Mayors in Europe are increasingly occupied in "sharing the vision" with governmental and non-governmental actors alike, in an effort to introduce guiding lines of action in the middle of increased



policy fragmentation. They use unconventional means such as the direct interaction with employees of all levels (and public service users) in order to reduce the centrifuge propensity of European societies, strengthening their political status and, therefore, increasing their possibilities to influence autonomous actors (Bevir et al., 2003a).

The reviewed literature offers an explanation of European local governance that permits the construction of sophisticated accounts of fragmentation and its management. On the one hand, fragmentation can be considered an adaptation means to accommodate the disparate needs of society; but, on the other, this can only be sustainable if some effort in limiting its effects is implemented. Thus, the resulting picture of governance is not that of an atomised society interacting with an atomised state but, rather, governance is characterised by the presence of clusters of governmental and non-governmental actors, re-arranged in a way that does not follow hierarchical structures, and maintained together by leaderships that are capable of creating convergence of interests around them. John (2001) and Le Gales (2002) assume that governance is not only the breaking-up and specialisation of policy sectors, but also the counteracting behaviour of politicians and administrators who try to hold together multiple public-private interests, interactions, and policy sectors. The role of fragmentation in local governance can be conceptualised as a tension between the need to make governmental responses more flexible, and the innovative means of regulators to steer an increasingly complex political environment.

### **Fragmentation in the three selected cases**

As in the European cases analysed by the local governance literature, governmental fragmentation, 'active citizenship' combined with a direct government-to-citizen interaction, and mayoral leadership are present in Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas City. They, however, are verified in different degrees and have dissimilar effects over the respective patterns of governance. The collected evidence points at complementary dynamisms among these three tendencies, being especially important the role of the mayor, counteracting the lack of co-ordination of the increased policy-making dispersal. At least in some aspects, this centripetal role of the mayor is shaped by the general political orientation of the party to which he/she belongs.

Some Mexican authors have argued a link between the rise in governmental fragmentation and political alternation in City Councils, especially during the decade of the 1990s. Hernández–Vicencio (2000a), for example, argues that opposition (non-PRI) governments in that decade typically began the construction of a partisan differential in the exercise of government by modifying the administrative and regulatory structure of the municipality. Once the new City Council was in functions, opposition mayors, trustees, and aldermen introduced policies to make administration more effective, which usually implied some bureaucratic re-organising and the creation of new municipal departments, the intensive introduction or modification of municipal regulations, and widespread change in the administrative and operative staff (*ibid.*). This general analysis is confirmed for the cases of Chihuahua and Baja California by Aziz–Nassif (1996) and Espinoza–Valle (2000a), respectively, who chart the changes introduced by the PAN once it won those state



governments and their capitals. In Orizaba, the PAN also introduced substantial changes in the administrative structure and functioning of the municipality in two consecutive periods commencing in 1995 (Velázquez–García, 1999); changes that had to be revoked or assumed under a different political discourse once the PRI regained the municipality in 2001. In León, the PAN implemented one of the most comprehensive plans of municipal transformation in the country (Bazdresh–Parada, 2002; Negrete, 2002). In Zacatecas, the main administrative change was introduced by the state government (also from the PRD) establishing a municipal civil service (Guerrero and Gryj, 2004).

Most of these contributions assume that different parties in office govern in different ways, producing distinguishable patterns of governance and administrative change. They also presuppose that the basic explanation for this is a combination of political ideology and intergovernmental relations: a given municipality in Mexico will receive preferential treatment if the governor of its state belongs to the same party. This allows the mayor to receive the necessary support to set up innovative programmes, or to complete expensive public works (Guillén–López and Ziccardi, 2004). Other analyses, on the other hand, tend to emphasise that current processes of ‘municipal reform’ are complex and that a categorisation by political party is risky, for pioneering programmes in participation or innovative mayoral governing styles are widespread regardless of the party (Cabrero–Mendoza, 2004a). Moreover, it seems that “there is not a direct connection between specific contents of the [municipal] reform and specific political parties in state governments” (Guillén–López and Ziccardi, 2004: 9), thus making predictions on governance patterns based on political party practically impossible.

This dissertation does not argue that patterns of local governance differ according to political party but, rather, that the general partisan orientation of the elected officials affects local governance in a *relative* way. Arguing that two different municipalities will automatically produce similar patterns of governance because they are governed by the same party does not take in account the evidence provided by the above-mentioned authors, and cannot be proved given the unevenness of the local contexts of the 2,435 municipalities in the country. Nevertheless, in the particular administrations studied in León, Orizaba and Zacatecas, a partisan differential in local governance was developed as a reaction to previous administrations of other parties. The New PRI administration of Orizaba (2001-2004) was considered important because it succeeded two consecutive PAN administrations that, in their turn, were presented by this party as models of good government<sup>22</sup>. León has been the municipal laboratory of the PAN since 1989, when the first opposition government was inaugurated. The 2000–2003 administration was considered a step further in the consolidation of a model of government that is different to the previous PRI governments<sup>23</sup>. Finally, the studied Zacatecas administration (1998-2001) was regarded as a referential model because it was one of the first state capitals won by the PRD, and like Mexico City, it was indicative of what an opposition government could achieve (PRD, 2000). Local governance in the three cases is shaped by the political party in the sense that these particular administrations developed innovations with respect to the preceding governments of other party affiliations. The resulting patterns of governance have some commonalities but they also differ in some aspects, especially in the kind of networks that they establish.

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Orizaba en Red (2003). “La administración Orizabeña podría municipalizar tránsito de no observar buenos resultados por parte del nuevo delegado”. *Orizaba en Red*, 10th December.

<sup>23</sup> Escudero – Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.



Aziz-Nassif (1996) has found evidence that supports the relative importance of the political party in local governance outcomes. Analysing the case of the state government of Chihuahua in the 1990s, he argues that political alternation in City Councils broke the monopoly of local governments' professionals and allowed the arrival of new political operators, who introduced a certain change in the rules of the political game. Notably among these rule changes, the introduction of bureaucratic fragmentation in the senses defined above has been present not only in Chihuahua, but also in other state opposition administrations in the 1990s, like Baja California, Guanajuato, and Nuevo León (Aziz-Nassif, 2000).

Governmental fragmentation has provided a new framework that modifies traditional clientelistic practices. Nevertheless, these modifications, although important enough to establish a partisan differential in the exercise of government, have not changed the basic rules of local politics in Mexico (*ibid.*). Many of the most innovative practices in Mexican local governance have been built over the old structures of corporatism and clientelism producing patterns of governance that, in spite of being different to the traditional way in which PRI governments worked, have resemblances with them. Many municipal programmes in the country based on 'active citizenship' and fragmentation have been possible thanks to a tradition of intensive interaction between government and society (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2003b). In this political environment, the fragmentation of bureaucratic structures has been instrumental in the redefinition of the new clientelistic practices of the studied municipalities.

*The proliferation of governmental agencies*

The main legal reference to determine the responsibilities of municipalities regarding public services is the Article 115 of the federal constitution. It lists the public services that are the competence of municipal administrations and the broad policy sectors under the control of City Councils. The mentioned article does not explicitly state administrative and clerical services that, nevertheless, have been traditionally provided by municipalities even before the constitutional amendment of 1983. These services are presupposed in the mandate of local governments, and usually comprise the Secretary of the Municipality, the Local Treasury, the Municipal Comptroller, and the Civil Registrar Office (which usually is subordinated to the Secretary of the Municipality). This constitutional article, on the other hand, does give a specific list of urbanisation services that municipal administrations are required to provide and supervise. If a local government is not equipped to meet these obligations, it is still obliged by federal law to establish an agreement with other municipalities, the state government, or private companies to ensure that the service is provided. The federal constitution mentions nine municipal policy areas or public services that are mandatory: 1) potable water, sewers, street drains, and treatment of residual waters, 2) public lighting, 3) sanitation, including garbage collection, recycling, and disposal, 4) public markets, 5) cemeteries, 6) abattoirs, 7) streets, parks, and public gardens, 8) public safety, which includes the maintenance of a police corps and traffic police (it does not require municipalities to have a firemen corps), 8) and any other authorised by the respective local congress (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 2002).



Federal laws allow the corresponding state to regulate the concrete administrative structure of its municipalities. The typical arrangement has a two-tier administrative structure directly dependent from the mayor. The upper tier comprises the departments (called *Secretarías* or *Direcciones*), which are divided into directorates (usually called *Co-ordinaciones*). Traditionally, there is a department for each policy sector defined in the federal constitution, with the sub-sectors of local policy handled by directorates. Citizens' councils, analysed in chapter four, are not part of the official administrative structure of the municipalities, but are established and managed by directorates, with which they have regular exchanges regulated by local laws. When these councils are especially influential, they can acquire a semi-official status that is recognised by both municipal staff and citizens. Metropolitan municipalities like León, Mérida, and Tijuana, have recently established this kind of semi-autonomous bodies. These agencies, usually planning institutes, have advisory functions and their directors are appointed to terms longer than those of the mayors, ensuring a degree of policy continuity and coherence between administrations. Finally, it is important to note that the formal administrative structure is only a rough indication of the operative fragmentation of policy. As Whitehead (2000: 16) argues, Mexican governmental agencies are very uneven in their performance, being "inflexible and oppressive in some areas and virtually inoperative in others". Practically all the interviewees, regardless of their status as governmental officials or non-governmental actors, could enumerate new governmental agencies that were highly ineffectual in spite of having staff and a part in the budget.

If the proliferation of autonomous agencies is considered, León is the most fragmented among the studied cases, followed by Orizaba and Zacatecas. León has

experienced a continuous rise in the number of departments and autonomous agencies since 1989. In the first PANista administration (1989–1991) the municipality had 11 departments and 2,900 employees. They grew to 14 departments and 3,100 employees in the 1992–1994 administration. In the period between 1995 and 1997, the mayor established another department, although he maintained the same number of employees (Cabrero–Mendoza, 1999b). In the studied administration (2000–2003), the total number of departments was 21 (including six semi-autonomous agencies), in addition to three directorates and four citizens' councils that were conspicuous for their influence in public opinion<sup>24</sup>. To date, the municipality has 4,054 employees (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2005). Some of these agencies deal with policy sectors that are atypical in Mexican municipalities, like public health, housing, and environment/ecology. In this case, the process of fragmentation consisted of both the atomisation of agencies (i.e. the upgrading of directorates into departmental status, increasing their autonomy to shape policy), and the introduction of completely new ones, like the semi-autonomous planning and service agencies such as the System of Potable Waters and Sewers of León, the Municipal Institute for Housing, the Municipal Institute of Women, and most notably, the Municipal Institute for Planning (IMPLAN) (see table 14).

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<sup>24</sup> Pedroza, J. R. (2003). "Garantiza LEA continuidad en proyectos estratégicos". *El Heraldo de León*, 11<sup>th</sup> September.



Table 14. Municipal agencies in the studied municipalities compared with the federal constitution

Federal Constitution	León	Orizaba	Zacatecas
Administrative	(D) Municipal Secretary (D) Municipal Comptroller (D) Municipal Treasury (D) Planning (different to IMPLAN)	(D) Municipal Secretary (D) Municipal Treasury (D) Provision and Maintenance	(D) Municipal Secretary (D) Municipal Comptroller (D) Municipal Treasury
Potable water, sewers, drains, and treatment of residual waters	(SAD) System of Potable Waters and Sewers of León (SAPAL)	(D) Potable Water	(D) Public Works and Services -oversees also public lighting, sanitation, markets, cemeteries, abattoirs, and public safety.
Public lighting		(D) Public works and urban management (also oversees streets, parks, public gardens)	
Sanitation, including garbage collection, recycling and disposal	(D) Sanitation. It also supervises cemeteries	(D) Sanitation (also supervises cemeteries and abattoirs)	
Public markets	(d) Commerce. It also supervises abattoirs.	(D) Commerce	
Cemeteries			
Abattoirs			
Streets, parks, and public gardens	(D) Public Works. It also oversees public lighting		
Public safety (municipal police corps and traffic police)	(D) Public Safety (including municipal police, traffic police, a special tactics corps, and emergencies' management)	(D) Public Safety (police corporations) (D) Civic Safety (emergencies' management)	
Any other authorised by the local congress	(D) Economic Development (D) Social Development (D) Environment and Ecology (D) Education (D) Promotion of Culture (D) Public Health (D) Rural Development (SAD) Department of Family Assistance (DIF) (SAD) Municipal Institute for Planning (IMPLAN) (SAD) Municipal Institute for Housing (SAD) Municipal Institute for Women (gender issues) (SAD) The Centre for the Study of León Urban Infrastructure (d) Spokesperson Office (d) Sports and Youth	(D) Economic Development (D) Governance (D) Social Development (D) Department of Family Assistance (DIF) (CC) Council of Municipal Development (CODEMUN)	(D) Economic Development (D) Citizens' participation (D) Department of Family Assistance (DIF) (CC) Council of Municipal Development (CODEMUN)

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(CC) Planning Council for  
Municipal Development  
(COPLADEMUN)  
(CC) Council for the  
Annual State Fair  
(CC) Population Council  
(CC) Prevention of Drug  
Addictions  
(CC) Prevention of  
Children's abuse

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Source: Data in Estados Unidos Mexicanos (2002), H. Ayuntamiento de Orizaba (2001), H. Ayuntamiento de León (2000), H. Ayuntamiento de Zacatecas (2001a). **Notes** (D) are agencies of departmental level, (SAD) Semi-autonomous Departments, (d) directorates (second level bodies), and (CC), citizens' councils with a semi-official status.

One of the first consequences of this intensive fragmentation has been the duplicity of functions. Rionda (2000), for example, mentions the redundancy caused by the IMPLAN with its interactions with the Planning Department, directly dependent from the mayor's office. Given that the decisions of the IMPLAN and the Planning Department are not legally binding, they still have to be approved by the City Council; but the positions of both agencies have equal rights of access to its sessions. This procedure complicates decision-making because the IMPLAN is perceived as a 'technical', almost neutral, body<sup>25</sup>, while the Planning Department seeks to advance in the, more political, 'flagship programmes' of the administration. Naturally, their positions do not always coincide.

A similar duplicity of functions is found in the new municipal policy sectors of health and housing, given that there are federal and state level agencies dealing with the same issues. A working arrangement has been reached having federal agencies to deal with citizens who are full-time employees (with complete social security rights), while state and municipal agencies have focused on the population that is part of the informal economy and that does not have social security access. The effectiveness of

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<sup>25</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



this approach has not been proved, for it would be more rational to invest in bettering and expanding the capabilities of already existing federal institutions than creating new local ones with essentially the same objectives. This is especially so when León's health and housing agencies have been criticised for being understaffed and under-equipped<sup>26</sup>. This fact suggests that at least some aspects of the governmental fragmentation process in the municipality of León are linked to the maintenance of the political capital resulting of providing services that, in the past, were exclusive of the federal and state governments. Being able to establish hospital, housing, and other expensive programmes provides a certain prestige regardless of the actual performance of the services.

In addition to this political rationale, Cabrero-Mendoza (1999b) has pointed out that León's expansion and specialisation of policy sectors is also related to the need of more differentiated, localised, and focused instruments to deal with its increasing urban problems. Given the sole size of the involved population and territory, Mexican metropolitan municipalities, like León, require a larger, more specialised, and therefore, more complex structure than medium-size municipalities (like Orizaba and Zacatecas) (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2004). Governmental fragmentation in large municipalities has gone hand in hand with an effort to maintain a constant expertise pool despite the change in administrations. A recent survey has showed that 36 per cent of the functionaries in large municipalities (with more than 500,000 inhabitants) have remained in their posts for two or more administrations, while in small (15,000 to 100,000 inhabitants) and rural municipalities (up to 15,000) only 9 per cent of

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Pedroza, J. R. (2003). "Garantiza LEA continuidad en proyectos estratégicos". *El Herald de León*, 11<sup>th</sup> September.

officials are in the same situation (*ibid.*: 765-780). The evidence suggests that large municipal bureaucracies in Mexico, given the absence of a civil service, are viable by sustained levels of officials' know-how acquired by permanence in the post. León is an example of this trend because it has one of the most complex administrative structures in the country, and has been able to preserve civil service-like dynamisms for more than three consecutive administrations (*cf.* Santos-Zavala, 1999).

Agency proliferation justified for political and technical reasons, and the mentioned expertise pooling, have been accompanied in León by a relevant business-sector component. At national level, businessmen run for mayors in an important proportion. In 1995, 56 per cent of the country's mayors came from the business sector, while in 2000 the percentage was 51 (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2004: 769). However, municipal top officials (directors and chiefs of directorates) traditionally have come from the social sector or the partisan militancy. By the late 1990s, 53 per cent of León's top officials (including the mayor) came from the business sector, a proportion higher than the national average, and the one found in Aguascalientes City (17 per cent) and Naucalpan (18 per cent), both urban municipalities of a similar size to León's and also governed by the PAN at the time (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999: 78). This is significant, for the business component in Mexico has been linked to the introduction of NPM policies, among which governmental fragmentation is one of the most important (*cf.* Ziccardi, 1995).

Orizaba is the second most fragmented municipality of the three cases. Unlike León, the literature on Mexican local government has not treated it in depth, and the few existing references analyse the changes introduced by the PAN governments between



1995 and 2000. Sobrino (1999), for example, argues that partisan alternation in the 1990s was instrumental to modify the traditional administrative structure and functioning of Orizaba. Most of these changes were kept in the 2001–2004 PRI's administration. However, being a city without the resources and problems of León, the fragmentation process has been moderate and the administrative structure has closely followed the policy areas mandated by the federal constitution.

During the studied administration, Orizaba kept a structure with a department for each important policy sector - in total 14, including a planning citizens' council (see table 14). Among these, two are especially significant. The first one is the Department of Governance, which has preponderantly political functions. It is in charge of the directorate of the spokesperson and the relations with the local media, but also supervises the distribution of public relations' information among the municipality's employees (Velázquez–García, 1999)<sup>27</sup>; it is also in charge of the coordination of an acquisitions committee, the comptroller's office, and of dealing with the emergent political problems, many of which were related in this particular administration to the application of the rules to sell alcoholic drinks, and other commerce related issues<sup>28</sup>.

The second noteworthy agency is the office of Commerce, which in Orizaba had a departmental status while in León it is a second level body. This suggests a confirmation of the importance that traditionally PRI governments have given to the

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<sup>27</sup> This article analyses the faculties of the Governance Department during the PANista administration that introduced it. Its basic functions, however, remained during the PRI's government, as the local press shows.

<sup>28</sup> Orizaba en Red (2004). "El director de gobernación de Orizaba [...] molesta a propietarios de bares y cantinas". *Orizaba en Red*, 25<sup>th</sup> January.

relations with street vendors and the commercial businesses in general, for both the departments of Governance and Commerce dealt with what was considered the most conflictive policy sector after urbanisation services in Orizaba<sup>29</sup>. The upgrading of the Department of Commerce was also, in part, a reaction to the criticised decision of the previous PAN administrations of concentrating a high number of directorates under a single department director. During the PAN governments, for example, the Department of Social Development alone oversaw all the matters related to education, promotion of cultural events and sports, youth issues, ecologic policies, and citizens' participation<sup>30</sup>, a fact that was known in the local press as the "super-departments"<sup>31</sup>. Having a small number of very well paid departmental directors supervising a high number of programmes was considered to risk neglecting important political actors<sup>32</sup>, and the Commerce and Governance Departments were created to give more detailed attention to potentially conflictive policy areas.

Orizaba has less departments than León; it has not established any semi-autonomous body, and the sole citizens' council with significant influence on overall policy is the Council of Municipal Development (analysed in chapter four). Thus, proliferation, autonomy, and hybridisation –the variables used in the above-mentioned definitions of fragmentation- are lower than in León. In the same way, there is not evidence of a significant level of duplicity of functions among the departments, for the division of their tasks appears to be very straightforward (H. Ayuntamiento de Orizaba, 2001). Nevertheless, the process of agency proliferation implemented during the previous

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<sup>29</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview, Orizaba. 12<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Cadó, Y. Personal interview. Orizaba. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Cruz –Arellano, E. Personal interview, Orizaba. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001.



PANista administrations, following the model of León<sup>33</sup>, increased the level of fragmentation that existed during the governments before 1995. The 2001–2004 PRI government did not return to the simpler administrative structure implemented during the pre-1995 PRI administrations, but retained the basic changes introduced by opposition. The Department of Governance, and programmes such as the *Citizen Day* –analysed in the following section of the chapter–, were kept by the PRI administration in spite of criticisms made during the 2000 campaign<sup>34</sup>. Other policies announced by the PANista administrations, like the intention to establish a municipal Traffic Police Department –a service that in Orizaba is still provided by a state-level agency<sup>35</sup>– were taken by the PRI administration as a bargaining tool to obtain a more beneficial treatment from the state government. The mayor announced that his administration would seek to establish a municipal Traffic Police Department if the state agency’s representation in the municipality continued ‘harassing’ local drivers<sup>36</sup>. The PRI administration has a more political profile than the previous PANista ones in the sense that the justification for the possible increase in the number and autonomy of municipal agencies is less technical and more reliant in arguments of ‘municipal autonomy’<sup>37</sup>.

Finally, the studied PRI administration has a lower proportion of officials who come from the business sector than the immediately preceding ones. In spite that there are not exact figures in this respect, it was evident that the number of businessmen

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<sup>33</sup> Escudero – Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). “El día de ayer se celebró la penúltima audiencia Ciudadana del año”. *Orizaba en Red*, 18th November.

<sup>35</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). “La administración Orizabeña podría municipalizar tránsito de no observar buenos resultados por parte del nuevo delegado”. *Orizaba en Red*, 10th December.

<sup>36</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). “Acusan autoridades cobros indebidos de CFE”. *Orizaba en Red*, 1st December.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

forming part of the top echelon of administrative staff diminished significantly when the PRI administration commenced<sup>38</sup>. Drs. Tomás Trueba and Ángel Escudero, the previous PAN mayors, were well known businessmen before entering politics (their families own an important hotel and a private hospital, respectively), and they brought in businessmen to occupy key administrative posts in their governments (Velázquez–García, 1999). Mr. Martín Cabrera, on the other hand, had a political background (mostly in the PRI administrative structure) and when he was elected mayor he formed an administration with directors of similar background<sup>39</sup>, being an exception the director of the Department of Economic Development who was an important businessman. Despite this shift in the profile of the administration, many of the changes introduced by the more ‘technical’ PAN governments remained, as it was already mentioned, confirming a typical trait of the ‘New PRI’ governments. ‘New PRI’ administrations usually introduce administrative and participative innovations that were in the past associated with the opposition governments, either because the municipality has experienced alternation in office, or because the PRI mayor won the elections with a small margin and he/she has to deal with a significant proportion of citizens that voted for other candidate (cf. Cabrero-Mendoza, 2002). In this sense, although the PRI recovered the government of Orizaba in 2001-2004, it did not implement a traditional PRI governing style but, rather, it developed governance dynamisms in some policy sectors, as it is explained below.

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<sup>38</sup> Cadó, Y. Personal interview. Orizaba. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Dujowich, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.



Zacatecas City is the less fragmented municipality of the three cases if the number of municipal agencies and their levels of autonomy are considered; but it is the second, after León, if one regards hybridisation introduced by public–private bodies (in this case, citizens’ councils). Zacatecas has a very compact administrative structure, with only seven main departments (none of which is semi-autonomous) and one citizens’ council relevant for decision-making on services funded by federal transfers (the Council of Municipal Development). The yearly municipal reports deal with policy areas separately, following basically the classification of the federal constitution: civil registrar office, legal department, public lighting, streets, public parks and gardens, potable water, cemeteries, public works, sanitation, public safety -comprising also municipal police-, social development -including citizens’ participation-, culture, youth issues, social communication, regulation of commerce, and abattoirs (Núñez–Monreal, M., 1999; Goytia–Robles, P., 2000). Nevertheless, most of these areas are dealt with by second-level agencies, being especially important the directorates coordinated by the Department of Public Works and Services, which oversees almost all services related to urbanisation processes. With a relatively compact administration and a small number of department directors, the mayor and City Council of Zacatecas can exert a closer supervision and a more effective control over policy than in Orizaba; and definitely more than in Leon, where 10 out of 28 municipal agencies have a considerable level of autonomy (see table 14).

If Zacatecas has a relatively low level of fragmentation defined as proliferation of autonomous agencies, it has higher levels of fragmentation produced by hybridisation. The Council of Municipal Development is a public–private body with planning functions that can produce binding decisions concerning the use of branch

33 funds. The council, made up by elected citizens and municipal officials, decide over the priorities in the maintenance and introduction of basic urban services, and its decisions must be implemented by both the mayor and the City Council<sup>40</sup>. The actual fragmentation of policy produced by this change of the locus of power is limited, given that the mayor, the aldermen, and the directors of key departments are still able to influence the decisions of this council. Nevertheless, unlike what happens in Orizaba and León where similar public-private planning councils work, this citizens' council can issue mandatory guidelines that even the City Council must follow. The citizens' councils of the three municipalities are analysed in depth in the following chapter. Here suffices to say that policy dispersal in Zacatecas has been accentuated, although still within manageable levels, by the introduction of a hybrid body with powers over the City Council, albeit in a very specific and well defined policy area.

As most opposition governments in the 1990s, the 1998–2001 PRD government of Zacatecas began by introducing management changes that secured the optimisation of its local income, especially the estate tax. These included the updating and expansion of the tax-payer database and the simplification of the payment processes<sup>41</sup>. This administrative re-engineering was complemented, as in the cases of León and Orizaba, by a systematic lobbying with state and federal agencies to obtain a more beneficial distribution of transfers<sup>42</sup>, and to facilitate the establishment of agreements with state agencies and other municipalities. In this respect, Zacatecas was one of the first municipalities in the region to establish an agency of inter-

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<sup>40</sup> Juárez – Alfaro, M. C. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Damasco, G. (1999). “Facilitan pago de impuesto predial”. *Momento de Zacatecas*, 17th June.

<sup>42</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). “Realizan la Segunda reunion Estado - municipios”. *Momento de Zacatecas*, 19th June.



municipal co-ordination (with the municipality of Guadalupe) in order to jointly provide potable water and the treatment of residual waters, public lighting, sanitation, public security by a common police corps, and to have joint public sessions of the two City Councils<sup>43</sup>. One of the effects of fragmentation in Zacatecas has been the development of these horizontal relations with other municipalities, bypassing state agencies<sup>44</sup>.

It is interesting to note that in order to optimise local income and administrative resources the PRD government has introduced a certain technocratic rationality, which has produced policy specialisation without actually generating proliferation of municipal agencies. The business component that has been linked to fragmentation in León, and in Orizaba during the PANista administrations, is not so important in Zacatecas, as most of the top officials come from the social and partisan sectors<sup>45</sup>. Zacatecas has a more political management of fragmentation, using its incapability to establish municipal departments, for example of potable water, in order to obtain a more favourable treatment from the federal agencies (in this case the cancellation of unpaid debts to the Federal Commission of Waters)<sup>46</sup>. Finally, having seven main departments with a straightforward division of functions by directorates (cf. H. Ayuntamiento de Zacatecas, 2001a) has kept redundancy lower than in León.

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<sup>43</sup> El Sol de Zacatecas (1999). "Firman alcaldesas convenio de colaboración de servicios". *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 7th November.

<sup>44</sup> Robles, F. (1999). "Zacatecas a la cabeza de Desarrollo municipal". *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 19th November.

<sup>45</sup> Goytia – Robles, P. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). "JLAPAZ pidió la condonación de pago de extracción". *Momento de Zacatecas*, 15th July.

*Establishing direct exchanges with the citizens*

In addition to fragmenting their structures or policy sectors, the studied municipalities have implemented a strategy of establishing direct and formal interactions between top officials capable of decision-making and individual citizens, bypassing neighbourhood associations and other traditional social representatives that, in the past, were the usual channel to obtain solutions to problems related to public services. This strategy has been instrumental to modify the traditional patterns of clientelism that were politically beneficial to the mayor, but that could be unsustainable in technical terms. This approach, common to the three cases of study, has also helped to link concrete citizens' needs with the correct municipal agency or agencies, increasing the speed and accuracy of governmental response. Besides, direct interaction with citizens has the value of reinforcing the role of the mayor and top officials of the municipality as main providers of public services, augmenting at the same time acceptance to policy.

Direct local official-to-citizen interaction has been implemented in other Latin American countries as a device to insert public opinion in the orientation of local governance (Blair, 2000). The main aim of these interactions in the studied cases, however, has been to facilitate the meeting of citizens' needs with municipal resources in the middle of the increased complexity resulting from governmental fragmentation. As the literature on governance predicts, when complexity in the government–society interactions increases, more non-hierarchical and direct, 'point-to-point', links are established (John, 2001; Le Gales, 2002). In the three cases of



study, the direct interaction with citizens has reinforced the political pre-eminence of the mayor vis-à-vis more autonomous and noteworthy municipal agencies.

As it was mentioned above, one of the main benefits of establishing direct interactions with citizens is that local officials can bypass social (and even partisan) representatives in their dealings with public service issues. In the times of the hegemonic party system it was customary for presidents of neighbourhood associations, local or federal deputies, or union representatives to act as negotiators to obtain the introduction of urban services in poor neighbourhoods<sup>47</sup>. They used to request specific neighbourhood improvements from the mayor and state officials (typically the paving of streets, or the introduction of public lighting or potable water) in exchange of political support<sup>48</sup>. Despite the fact that most public services were not directly provided by local governmental agencies, the mayor always has been influential in determining policy priorities and, therefore, which neighbourhood would have its needs addressed first<sup>49</sup>. Clientelism was legitimised by a political culture that understood social and political representatives as valid interlocutors with local governments, and the interaction with them as a way to gain acceptance to policy.

Clientelism was one of the first practices restrained by local governments during the 1990s (cf. Ziccardi, 1995). Once the hegemonic party system was replaced by an operational electoral democracy, clientelistic practices began to be considered as a

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<sup>47</sup> Conde, L. E. Personal interview, León. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2002; Cruz –Arellano, E. Personal interview, Orizaba. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001; Medina – Lizalde, J. L. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

possible source of governance problems. Interviewed politicians see informally elected neighbourhood and social representatives as “non-party politicians”, more interested in their prospective public careers than in solving the problems of their respective neighbourhoods<sup>50</sup>. Not recognising their leadership is considered a way to fight corruption because negotiations conducted in closed policy networks, where only the mayor and social representatives participate, do not ensure accountability to the City Council<sup>51</sup>.

The three studied municipalities have implemented programmes to establish direct interaction with individual citizens. Among them, the *Citizen's Day* [*Día Ciudadano*] has been one of the most important. The *Citizen's Day* scheme deals with petitions related to public services using short personal interviews with local officials, including the mayor. The meetings are held in open spaces under the scrutiny of the local press, which is normally invited. The requests typically relate to poor quality in services and faults in their functioning, like the replacement of streetlamps, re-paving, or fixing leakages in the potable water network, but they also include more complex ones, like the complete introduction of urban services to neighbourhoods without them. In order to participate, the person presenting a complaint or a petition must fill in a form asking for the interview. If it is a communal petition, some evidence (in the form of a significant number of the neighbours' signatures) must be presented, so it can be proved that the person asking for the interview is not a “self-appointed” representative<sup>52</sup>. Once in the interview, the mayor or the director of the

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<sup>50</sup> Guerrero, H. Personal interview. León. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001; Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003; Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001, and Velasco – Pagaza, M. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Osegueda – Cruz, A. Personal interview, Xalapa. 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001.



corresponding department deals with the petition in a direct way, many times issuing the necessary directive while the petitioner is still in his/her presence. Finally, a follow-up mechanism evaluates the time and quality of the official's response. This basic model of interaction was designed during the last years of the 1989-1995 PANista administration of the state of Baja California, more specifically in the municipality of Tijuana, where a pilot programme was used to test the model<sup>53</sup>. However, the first time the *Citizen's Day* was implemented as a flagship programme, accompanied with a political discourse that proposed it as a means to fight clientelism, was January 11<sup>th</sup> 1995, in León (Bazdresh–Parada, 2002; and interview of the previous footnote).

The implementation of the *Citizen's Day* model, under different names, has allowed municipalities to have a picture of the societal level of satisfaction with the public services they provide. In the year 2000, the National Survey on Institutional Development of Municipalities asked citizens which were the most problematic public services in their respective neighbourhoods (they could mention more than one), and in 59.7 per cent of the responses potable water was mentioned. This was followed by sewers (38.3 per cent), sanitation, specifically garbage collection, (38 per cent), public safety (37 per cent), street lighting (35.5 per cent), street sweeping (25.1 per cent), public transport (15.7 per cent), public markets (14.1 per cent), the Department of Traffic Police (9.3 per cent), abattoirs (8 per cent), cemeteries (7.1 per cent), and public parks and gardens (3.3 per cent) (García del Castillo, 2003). This structure of dissatisfaction is basically the same detected in the studied municipalities by their respective *Citizen's Day*, as it is explained below. Nevertheless, useful as it is,

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<sup>53</sup> Pérez – Franco, A. Personal interview. Mexico City, February 7<sup>th</sup> 2005.

the *Citizen's Day* is centred in the municipality as a public service provider, and has been designed under the assumption that citizens' participation in it is a positive measure of public service quality. This approach expects citizens to adapt to the particular mechanisms of participation offered by the municipality, which can be too inflexible as to answer to the expectations created by the possibility of having interviews with the mayor, and too focused on problem-solving as to be a reliable indicator of overall service quality. An important criticism made by Mexican scholars is that the programme avoids social participation in the strict sense of the term, for it only engages in interactions with individual citizens. As a professor of an important public university put it, the *Citizen's Day* generates

no real citizens' participation. Citizens' participation is understood as individual citizens' participation, in concrete actions. That is, it is expected that citizens participate in programmes [...] where the mayor and his/her staff go to the different neighbourhoods to sit with locals to talk about their specific troubles. If there are holes in the paving, they are filled. If painting, sweeping, or building something is necessary, this is done. This is evidently a move towards [solving] the people's problems. But social participation is not understood as the main means for [political] change. It might be, finally, only a means for reinforcing their good political image<sup>54</sup>.

In spite of these shortcomings, the programme was well received in León, where it was known as the *Citizen's Wednesday*. During its first triennium (1995–1997), 166,880

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<sup>54</sup> Osegueda – Cruz, A. Personal interview, Xalapa. 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



petitions were presented (H Ayuntamiento de León, 1997). A similar number is reported for the following administration –approximately 170,000 made directly and 17,500 via a telephonic service (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2000). By 2000, municipal officials had maintained more than 400,000 interviews accumulated in two municipal administrations and the first year of the third (Cabrero–Mendoza et al., 2001), which is roughly equivalent to 35 per cent of the municipality's population. The *Citizen's Wednesday* is directly managed by the mayor's office, and is considered the most important participation mechanism in the studied administration (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2000).

As Bazdresh–Parada (2002) argues, the *Citizen's Wednesday* has had a positive impact in municipal administration because it is amply known as a relatively direct way to reach the mayor and influence policy, it has been continuously implemented since 1995, and in almost 10 years it has dealt with problems related to public services in 80 per cent of the city's neighbourhoods. According to a survey applied in 2001 to the direct beneficiaries of the programme, 51 per cent considered that they had received a 'good treatment' to their petitions and 32 per cent 'very good treatment' (ibid.). After almost a decade, however, the general impression among users is that their complaints are heard and paid attention to, but only during the hours on Wednesday when municipal officials are available (ibid.). More importantly, the programme has experienced a stagnation in the number of participants given that the mayor and departmental directors have begun to send second-level officials to the interviews, creating a distinction between 'real' *Citizen's Wednesdays* when decision-makers attend, and the meetings where lower-level officials are present (ibid.) Finally, the problems originating the interviews in the first place have not been definitely

solved, for they involve expensive investment in the urban infrastructure. The main problem in León, the water supply, is the most frequent subject of the interviews with municipal officials<sup>55</sup>. It cannot be completely solved, however, without drilling new wells in land that does not belong to the municipality, which was the subject of unsuccessful negotiations with other City Councils during, at least, two thirds of the studied administration<sup>56</sup>.

The case of León shows the difficulties of embarking in fragmenting policy sectors and the administration of the municipality while opening, at the same time, channels of participation. As Santos–Zavala (1999) argues, the PANista model of León has tried to curb clientelistic practices by focusing policy sectors and making the petition process transparent. Nevertheless, the interaction itself of the *Citizen's Wednesday* is based on the traditional presupposition that the citizen must reach out to the mayor in order to obtain access to public services. The mayor, as main responsible for service provision, distributes benefits based on an equal access policy and without conditioning them to receiving political support. Dealing in an interview with a particular (individual) problem, however, is made necessary because the normal mechanisms of public service coverage are unable to detect and solve them. The *Citizen's Wednesday* is designed to deal with the extra-ordinary problems related to service provision that can be damaging to the governmental public image. In this sense, the programme works on the basis of an extended clientele, which includes all citizens capable of requesting an interview with municipal officials, but that could be

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<sup>55</sup> Alderete, A. (2002). "Molesta a guajeños olvido de autoridades municipales". *El Sol de León*, 23rd May.

<sup>56</sup> Guevara, S. (2002). "Continuará SAPAL extracción de agua de pozos romitenses". *El Sol de León*, 21st May.



as politically beneficial to mayors as traditional clientelism was for the PRI before the 1990s.

In Orizaba the programme was introduced in 1996 as the result of an official visit of its aldermen to León<sup>57</sup>. The programme, called *Citizen's Tuesday*, was implemented during the rest of the 1995–1997 administration, and in the following one. In 2000, the candidate of the PRI criticised the programme as not being accessible to persons of all socio-economic strata, and announced that it would be cancelled if he won the election. Once Mr. Cabrera was elected mayor, he decided to keep the programme calling it *Citizens' Audience*<sup>58</sup>, and combined it with public sessions of the City Council (*Cabildo Abierto*) in different neighbourhoods of the city<sup>59</sup>. The City Council usually had its public sessions in schools or parks, with the possibility of having short questions or statements from a previously defined number of citizens in attendance. After the session's end, the mayor and the department directors continued with a small number of interviews that also included collective ones<sup>60</sup>.

It is interesting to note that in Orizaba, the aforesaid 'active citizenship' presupposed in some governance models (cf. Le Gales and John, 1997), which makes possible the interactions of the *Citizens' Audiences*, has been linked to the participatory tradition of the unions of the region. Osegueda (2000), for example, has argued that the late 1980s decline of the Regional Confederation of Workers and Peasants (CROC) in Orizaba, Río Blanco, and Ciudad Mendoza was concomitant to the strengthening of

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<sup>57</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview, Orizaba. 12<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>58</sup> Dujowich, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>59</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "El día de ayer se celebró la penúltima audiencia ciudadana del año". *Orizaba en Red*, 18th November.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

the partisan life of the PRD and the PAN in these municipalities. It certainly has not been demonstrated that the social mobilisation produced by this partisan revitalisation substituted the role or influence of the brewery and textile unions of the region affiliated to the CROC, nor that the partisan revitalisation of the 1990s has encouraged the participation in the *Citizens' Audiences* after so many years. There is anecdotal evidence, however, mentioned by Osegueda (2000) and some interviewees<sup>61</sup> that suggests that in Orizaba there is a cultural disposition to have an intensive interaction with local authorities (attending meetings at the City Hall, asking for interviews with aldermen, organising meetings in neighbourhoods) established by the activity of the union of the Cuauhtémoc–Moctezuma brewery, the second oldest brewery in the country and the largest employer in the municipality. This relationship has still to be confirmed. Nevertheless, the two preceding PAN administrations considered the *Citizen's Tuesday* as a means to debilitate the influence of the former union leaders in neighbourhoods, and to direct citizens' participation into a more transparent relation with municipal officials<sup>62</sup>.

During the 1995–1997 administration, the *Citizen's Tuesday* received a total of 6,161 petitions concerning mostly potable water, street paving, the municipal police, and regulations for commerce and public events (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Orizaba, 1997). In the following administration, approximately 9,850 interviews were conducted in its three-year period (H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Orizaba, 2000, and interview of the previous footnote). By the first quarter of the last year of the PRI administration, the mayor and the departmental directors had organised 106

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<sup>61</sup> Cuahua, J. Personal interview. Orizaba. 17<sup>th</sup> January 2002; Espinoza de los Monteros, I. Personal Interview. Orizaba. 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>62</sup> Escudero – Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.



public audiences with a total estimate of 48,970 persons received in individual and collective interviews<sup>63</sup>. If the numbers are accurate, this would mean that in a period of 8 years, municipal officials of the three administrations met with almost 55 per cent of the population of Orizaba. The disproportion between the number of interviewed persons in the PRI and the PAN administrations can be explained by their somewhat different approach. While the PAN governments made an explicit policy not to accept social representatives, and therefore conducting only individual interviews, the PRI mayor developed a more flexible approach, accepting citizens' groups in the audiences and recognising their representatives as presenters of a petition<sup>64</sup>. Nevertheless, there is not evidence that such representatives were given the role of interlocutors or negotiators with local government, as it was traditional in the *old* PRI administrations.

When the *Citizen's Tuesday* was introduced, the great majority of the petitions were addressed to the mayor and were related, as it was already mentioned, to problems of potable water and other public services, such as street lighting<sup>65</sup>. As demands concerning basic public services were dealt with, the petitions moved to problems of land-use regulation, public transport, and requests to implement economic development programmes for small and medium sized businesses (Velázquez-García, 1999). During the first years of the PRI administration, the main concerns among the population attending to the audiences were garbage collection, public safety, street lighting, and the participation in federal programmes such as the scholarships of the

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<sup>63</sup> Orizaba en Red (2004). "Atienden a 640 ciudadanos en al primera audiencia pública del año". *Orizaba en Red*, 4th March.

<sup>64</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Atienden autoridades a 300 personas en audiencia pública en El Espinal". *Orizaba en Red*, 17th July.

<sup>65</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview. Orizaba. 4th September 1998.

Federal Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL)<sup>66</sup>; but as the months passed by there was a sensible shift to direct appeals made to the mayor to implement policies to promote the creation of local jobs by attracting investments<sup>67</sup>, and by opening more positions in the municipal administration, particularly in the departments that require no previous technical expertise like the Police Corps, Provision and Maintenance, and Public Works and Urban Management<sup>68</sup>. The more political profile of Mr. Cabrera, mentioned above, is also shown in the kind of petitions accepted by his administration. If there was not recognition of social representatives as valid negotiators to obtain public services, on the other hand the mayor did intervene in favour of some local organisation's petitions, negotiating with private companies and other levels of government. There are examples such as the negotiation of more concessions of taxis (which are regulated by the state government)<sup>69</sup>, the negotiation with the state government and the owners of an important chemical factory to avoid a strike<sup>70</sup>, and the attempt to convince a neighbouring municipality to jointly donate a land property to the CROC in order to build low-priced houses for this union's members<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "El día de ayer se celebró la penúltima audiencia Ciudadana del año". *Orizaba en Red*, 18th November.

<sup>67</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Demandan ciudadanos empleo en audiencia pública". *Orizaba en Red*, 28th May.

<sup>68</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Atienden autoridades a 292 personas en audiencia pública en palacio municipal". *Orizaba en Red*, 19th June.

<sup>69</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Serán para el CRIIO 3 concesiones de taxis: MCZ". *Orizaba en Red*, 21st November.

<sup>70</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Confirmado: reabren FERMEX!". *Orizaba en Red*, 22nd October.

<sup>71</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Pide la CROC a alcaldes de Orizaba e Ixtac donen un predio para construir viviendas a trabajadores al servicio del ayuntamiento". *Orizaba en Red*, 24th September.



The *Citizen's Tuesday* and the public audiences reinforced the mayor's position not only as service provider and top political negotiator, but also as gatekeeper of and conductor to other sections of the municipal bureaucracy. One of the most apparent functions of the mayor is to direct petitioners to the correct municipal department. Most petitioners would seek to talk with the mayor first, as they want to express their concern directly to him, "even over department directors and aldermen"<sup>72</sup> who most of the time can solve the petition more directly. Aldermen and directors eventually have to deal with the petitions, but after the mayor has knowledge of them. This is very time-consuming for the mayor but is a practice that has persisted since the time of the PAN administrations:

In the *Citizen's Wednesday* you are outdoors to receive everybody. Some would ask for favours: a loan, a medicine, etc. In most of the cases they would inform you about a situation without giving you alternative solutions. But because I was always with the directors of my departments, my main job was to remind people that the City Hall opens its doors every weekday; that they did not need to come especially on a single day in order to formulate a petition. And then I would send them to the appropriate department. Do you want to solve a problem related to potable water? Then go first to the Potable Water Department. If the boss of the department or the co-ordinator of the directorate does not solve your problem, then you can come to me [...] That is my main job:

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<sup>72</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "El día de ayer se celebró la penúltima audiencia ciudadana del año". *Orizaba en Red*, 18th November.

to direct citizens to the appropriate office, so they can be listened to without the need of a powerful intermediary making all the decisions<sup>73</sup>.

In Zacatecas the programme was called *Public Audience*, and was introduced in the studied PRD administration. During its three year period, the government received roughly 6,000 registered petitions through individual and collective interviews in the City Hall and the mayor's visits to the neighbourhoods, making this the smallest programme in the case studies (Núñez–Monreal, 1999; Goytia–Robles, 2000; and interview with Ortiz, O. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002). As in the other two municipalities, the *Public Audience* programme is managed directly by the mayor's office, although the Directorate of Social Management (*Gestión Social*), part of the Department of Citizens' Participation, usually deals with the practicalities of arranging the interviews. In the case of Zacatecas, this is a strategy not only to secure that the mayor's decisions will effectively shape the performance of this flagship programme, but also to ensure that the departmental directors and aldermen will pay attention to the petitions, knowing that the mayor is informed about them<sup>74</sup>.

The directorate of Social Management is in charge of sorting out the interviews, trying to direct requests to other departments before they reach the mayor<sup>75</sup>. This directorate also co-ordinates much of the charity work that the municipality carries out in the *Public Audiences*. Zacatecas, like the PRI administration of Orizaba, has kept need-based schemes of direct assistance to poor neighbourhoods<sup>76</sup>. PRD politicians

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<sup>73</sup> Escudero – Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>74</sup> Muñoz – López, A. Personal interview. León. 19<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>75</sup> Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>76</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). "Ayuntamiento apoya a Nueva Australia". *Momento de Zacatecas*, 18th July.



argue that poor neighbourhoods expect some kind of help in any case, and that it is better to regulate it so the exchanges are more transparent<sup>77</sup>. The Social Management directorate distributes construction time-materials (bricks, tiles, metal sheets, and cement, in packages to complete self-build houses), amounts of money to fund funerals, scholarships for children in elementary school, and food. Up to January 2002 Zacatecas had given 400 of such aid packages<sup>78</sup>.

As it is explained in chapter four, this time-material sharing scheme has its immediate predecessor in the National Programme of Solidarity (PRONASOL). The aid is assigned according to a priority list prepared by social workers that conduct interviews and determine if it can be repaid. When the recipients are able to repay, they usually give ten per cent of the cost of the materials, or they do some hours of community work<sup>79</sup>. Finally, it is interesting to note that unlike León and Orizaba, where the petitions have begun to move towards training and job-seeking services, in Zacatecas most petitions deal with basic urbanisation services, like potable water, sewers, and street lighting<sup>80</sup>. The mayor of Zacatecas, Mr. Goytia–Robles, like Mr. Cabrera of Orizaba, has played a role in negotiating social petitions with other levels of government<sup>81</sup>, without actually recognising independent associations as negotiators to obtain public services from the municipality.

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<sup>77</sup> Medina – Lizalde, J. L. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>78</sup> Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). “Ayuntamiento apoya a Nueva Australia”. *Momento de Zacatecas*, 18th July.

<sup>81</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). “Colonias piden ayuda del H. Ayuntamiento”. *Momento de Zacatecas*, 9th July.

Using an approach that fragments policy sectors and the interactions with citizens, preferring individual exchanges over social ones, has several advantages for the studied municipalities. The most apparent one is that in spite of increasing the number of actors, it reduces their relative importance. Atomising interactions between citizens and local officials requires procedural changes that increase administrative complexity. Now mayors must rely more in decisions taken without their direct involvement in a greater number of departments and directorates, which have to deal with more specialised policy networks and communities. However, dealing with particular citizens presenting individual requests is less demanding on political resources than the traditional practices based on semi-official exchanges with social organisations. The political pressure that social organisations (recognised as negotiators of public services) can exert is undeniably higher than the one exercised by an individual. In this sense, governmental fragmentation can be instrumental in augmenting the government's political manoeuvre space. Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas, being confronted with scarcity of resources and increased citizens' demands, have diminished the risk of social confrontation by excluding community representatives from the management of public service problems. In addition, fragmenting participation has also increased the perception that proximity to local officials is greater than in the past. These programmes allow the establishment of direct networks between local officials and users of services, which can be helpful to the growth of the acceptance of municipal policies.



*The mayor's leadership*

The third relevant element in the process of governmental fragmentation of Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas is mayoral leadership. This has been instrumental in reducing some of the unwanted effects of fragmentation, like policy incoherence and redundancy, by placing the mayor's person at the centre of the hierarchical and non-hierarchical interactions between departments, directorates, and individual citizens.

The mayor's influence, exerted by non-bureaucratic means, is especially important to develop governing styles that enable citizens to establish differences between political parties in office. At the same time, a change in a governing style is easily identifiable, and certainly less expensive than implementing structural changes. From this standpoint, practically all interviewees argue that all mayors behave differently in office and that this general orientation is somehow influenced by the party to which they belong. This rather imprecise notion, present in most conducted interviews, is probably more related to cultural perceptions of the corresponding political party. However, there is some anecdotal evidence that suggests that there is a link between the general discursive orientation of a political party and the kind of means used to maintain and establish networks. This still has to be demonstrated by a study on Mexican municipal political culture, but the style of the PANista mayor of León is usually characterised as business-like. Mr. Luis E. Ayala-Torres is a former businessman and behaves like one, establishing close networks with commerce chambers, introducing productivity criteria in public administration (assessing policy according a cost-benefit relation), and lacking the "political sensitivity" to ensure the

support of traditional institutions such as the unions<sup>82</sup>. In Orizaba, Dr. Escudero (from the PAN) was criticised for not being responsive to the “political sensitivities of the local media and the brewery union, attracting unnecessary bad press”<sup>83</sup>. Mr. Cabrera, on the other hand, is a politician of the PRI’s school: he quickly developed close relations with the local press (inviting a prominent journalist to head his spokesperson office), and with other local interest groups, inviting almost all important socio-political actors to his period’s inauguration<sup>84</sup>. Mr. Goytia–Robles, on the other hand, was considered a person especially close to social organisations that backed up the PRD in the elections for governor in 2000<sup>85</sup>.

The particular governing style and political sympathies of the mayors of the three analysed municipalities have shaped their leaderships. John (2001: 14-16) has pointed out that one of the characteristics of governance is the development of “more prominent forms of executive leadership”, given that traditional policy co-ordination is not as effective as it used to be in the middle of increased governmental fragmentation. As it was explained in chapter two, mayors in Mexico have traditionally occupied the centre of local politics, for municipal government’s structure reproduces some of the conditions that have generated presidentialism at national level. Nevertheless, the evidence discussed above suggests that in Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas there has been a partial shift towards governance in the role of the mayor: if in the past his/her centrality was maintained mostly by hierarchy and a hegemonic party system, now it also has to be supported by non-hierarchical, circumventing, direct interactions with a number of governmental and non-

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<sup>82</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>83</sup> Kuri – Rosado, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2001.

<sup>84</sup> Cadó, Y. Personal interview. Orizaba. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>85</sup> Ruíz – Ramírez, M. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



governmental actors. The following chapters analyse the role of these networks in developing governance modalities.

The proximity between the mayor and citizens, developed in programmes like the *Citizen's Day*, helps to legitimise administrations in exchange for improvements in public services. Mayors use social rituals, like appearing outdoors expediting services to which citizens are entitled anyway, in order to establish networks that link them with policy areas that are politically important. But at the same time, networks within bureaucracy help them to bypass administrative divisions that can be constraining to problem solving. Having in the same place all departmental chiefs, citizens, and politicians involved in a petition or complaint does not ensure efficiency, but it places all resources at the disposal of the person in charge of making decisions. Mayoral leadership also helps to limit autonomy among fragmented governmental agencies and citizens' participation. Networks established by *Citizen's Day* and other programmes have, in the end, the mayor as the main actor. But, unlike more traditional policy networks, they are short-lived and created around specific and relatively small public service issues. That forces municipalities to maintain a constant interaction trying to attract participation and, consequently, sustain legitimacy. In this way, Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas have implemented programmes that, having the mayor as their centre, try to reach citizens that do not attend to public audiences. The mayors of the three cases of study usually visit neighbourhoods, as they used to do during their respective campaigns, in order to be in contact with citizens and inaugurate public works, many of which are built using schemes of social co-operation.

## Conclusions

Orizaba, León and Zacatecas have fragmented their bureaucratic structures to different degrees in an effort to specialise policy-making and respond more quickly to citizens' demands. They also have promoted fragmented citizens' participation as a means to reinforce their pre-eminence as service providers, not giving social representatives the status of negotiators in public service issues. Finally, the mayor's office has developed more flexibility in its interactions within the bureaucratic structure and with citizens in general. The crux of the approach found in the three case studies seems to be the centralisation of programmes that have more legitimising potential, like the ones where there is direct interaction between the mayor, seen as provider of services, and the citizens, considered as clients. At the same time, the mayor's office has delegated day-to-day functions to the departmental directors. In this way, the mayor is able to link and avoid sections of the bureaucratic structure or social groups according to his/her convenience, which would be extremely difficult to do using the traditional municipalities' way to operate.

Out of the three case studies, León has the higher fragmentation levels defined as the increased number and autonomy of agencies proposed by Campbell et al. (1989), John (2001), Le Gales (2002), and Pierre and Peters (2000). Orizaba and Zacatecas have lower dispersal of policy-making produced by proliferation and autonomy, being the latter the studied municipality with the most compact municipal administration. If fragmentation is defined in terms of the introduction of public-private bodies (as Mlinar, 1995; Rhodes, 1997; and Wilson, 1998 do), León is also more fragmented than Orizaba and Zacatecas, although this last municipality has the



potential of increasing in fragmentation quickly, giving that its citizens' planning council is capable of issuing binding decisions to the City Council. Orizaba has the lower levels of fragmentation defined in both senses of the term.

An important implication of this differentiated level of fragmentation is that if this attribute is considered a defining variable in the patterns of governance, as John (2001), Le Gales (2002), Pierre and Peters (2000), and Rhodes (1997) presuppose, then the shift from government to governance in the three cases of study has been verified at different speeds and in different degrees. As the analysed literature argues, fragmentation plays an important role in introducing new governmental and non-governmental actors in policy processes, bringing in innovative government mechanisms and modalities that rely on networks, as the definition of John (2001) proposes. The interesting point raised by the studied municipalities is that the different ways to address governmental fragmentation found in these local governments is related to the political party in office. Certainly, it can not be proved that municipalities of the same party govern in similar ways in all regions of the country regardless of their particular local contexts, as the work of Cabrero-Mendoza (2004) demonstrates. The similarities between the PAN administrations of Orizaba and León are rather explained by the explicit policy of the 1995–1997 and 1998–2000 administrations of Orizaba to implement a model of governance that is relatively advanced in both its design and implementation process, and that is amply advertised by the PAN among its governments (Velázquez- García, 1999).

To be more precise, political party in office has shaped governance patterns in the three cases by establishing a degree of difference with traditional PRI governments.

The three local governments manage their bureaucracies, engage in interactions with petitioners, and develop governing styles that are different to *old* PRI administrations. León has numerous agencies and citizens' councils that have increased fragmentation, which is different to the unified administration controlled by the mayor that was usual in the times of the hegemonic party system. The PRI administration of Orizaba, on the other hand, has reacted to changes introduced by the PAN by maintaining the increased level of policy specialisation, and the approach of the public audiences based on more fragmented interactions. In this sense, although the PRI returned to Orizaba, it was not the same old PRI. Finally, Zacatecas has developed an approach that has maintained bureaucratic fragmentation at low levels, but increased the relevance of the decisions of its citizens' planning council. The conclusions argued in this chapter are similar to the ones reached by Raco (2002: 452) for the UK, who has found that local governments have introduced mechanisms of interaction with citizens but in a rather "circumscribed and selective manner". As Cabrero-Mendoza (2003a) argues, Mexican municipalities have allowed policy-making to be guided by citizens' demands, as it appears to be in the studied cases but, typically, the mayors have selected those public service problems whose solution might be possible in their three-year government period. In this sense, the shift to governance indicated by fragmentation has been partial in the three case studies.

The following chapter deals further with the processes of opening up policy-making by the incorporation of citizens' networks as decision-makers, and not only as informants or petitioners.



## Chapter Four

### “Blurring boundaries” and local governance

#### Introduction

In chapter one, I argue that the analysed definitions of governance (understood as paradigms of policy-making and implementation) propose increased governmental fragmentation, the ‘blurring of boundaries’ between the public and private spheres, and augmented self-organisation among non-governmental actors as common attributes of governance. These attributes are shaped by local and national contexts (John, 2001; Le Gales, 2002) generating variants that, nevertheless, can still be categorised as cases of governance. Therefore, a reference to local and national contexts is a requirement to attain differentiated and sophisticated accounts of the ‘shift to governance’ argued by the reviewed literature. Chapter two is an initial approach to the Mexican context, focusing on the emergent trends of governance that, although developing in many local governments, are neither present in all municipalities nor in all policy sectors. Chapter three centres its argument in governmental fragmentation, one of the aforesaid traits of governance according to the literature. In this preceding chapter, I argue that the three cases of study have fragmented their policy sectors and corresponding dealings with citizens in an effort to speed up their response to societal demands, and modify traditional clientelistic practices. At the same time, mayoral leadership has been instrumental in limiting some of the unwanted effects of this fragmentation, such as severe policy dispersal or incoherence.

This chapter continues with the analysis of governance trends in the case studies, but this time focusing on the ‘blurring of boundaries’ between the public and private spheres. The core argument of this chapter is that the ‘blurredness’ between the traditional roles of governmental and non-governmental actors has augmented in the three studied municipalities as the result of the formal incorporation of networks of citizens into the policy-making and implementation processes. Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas have augmented their respective reliance on citizens’ networks in order to design policy and implement some municipal programmes. These networks, unlike the maintained by neighbours’ associations and unions co-opted by the PRI in the past, are established at the municipality’s initiative, and are comparatively open, not conditioning their membership on the support or affiliation to a partisan organisation. The reliance on this kind of network in the three municipalities, however, is verified for the most part in the policy sectors related to basic urbanisation services, especially in the processes involved in their introduction in neighbourhoods that are undersupplied. The studied municipalities make use of networks in different degrees and modalities, ranging from traditional consultation for planning, to decision-making about services funded by federal transfers. In general, the interactions within these policy networks are shaped by the policy sector in which they work, how loose they are, and the procedures established for their operation.

If governance is the “flexible pattern of public decision-making based on loose networks of individuals” (John, 2001: 9), then the above-mentioned dynamisms emerging in the case studies show an apparent shift from government to governance in the paradigms of policy-making, although a limited one. The interactions between



municipal officials and citizens' bodies analysed in this chapter indicate a rise in the flexibility of governmental procedures and in the openness of policy communities related to public services' performance. Having said that, it is important to note that as the functioning of the citizens' bodies becomes more institutionalised, their members acquire a semi-official status that reduce the 'looseness' of the networks in which they participate. In this sense, the above-mentioned governance understanding of John (2001) is more appropriate for the citizens' bodies that work at micro level, in the neighbourhoods of the three municipalities. As the participatory public-private bodies increase in complexity, as the case of León illustrates, the interactions between government officials and citizens become more bureaucratised, and governance dynamisms develop some of the inter-organizational characteristics argued by Cole and John (2001), and Rhodes (1997).

This chapter elaborates on this argument by analysing the Neighbourhood Committees, the Committees of Public Works, and the Citizens' Councils put into operation in the three municipalities to assist authorities in planning and decision-making on public services. It begins with the consideration of networks as an explanatory variable in the governance understandings, in order to follow with the analysis of the above-mentioned citizens' bodies as exemplars of the three municipalities' reliance on networks. The final sections of the chapter consider some implications of the introduction of networks as a policy-making mechanism over accountability, and the different factors that shape governance variants.

## Governance and networks

The concept of network is an important component of the different understandings of sub-national and national governance. Authors such as Daly (2003), John (2001), and Rhodes (1997) argue that the main difference between government and governance as paradigms of policy-making is the latter's extensive use of networks (made up by individual citizens, social groups, or organizations) as a mechanism to co-ordinate and steer fragmented polities.

At the same time, governance understandings propose that the dynamisms introduced by networks in policy-making blur the distinction between the roles of public, private, and third sector actors. Governance is characterised by the 'blurring of boundaries' among the governmental, social, and market sectors not only because the increased societal complexity has redefined some of their traditional functions, making this tripartite classification too rigid to analyse hybrid or border dynamisms (Pierre and Peters, 2000), but also because it is becoming increasingly evident that complex policy issues require an inter-sectoral and multi-level approach that focuses on resources and *loci* of power dispersed among a great diversity of actors, regardless of the sectors in which they have been classified traditionally, or the issues being considered (Kooiman, 1993a). The analysed literature presupposes that governance, networks, and the resulting blurredness are inter-linked phenomena, being an important research topic to establish the circumstances in which this assumption is verified in contexts outside western industrialised countries.



The concept of the ‘blurring of boundaries’ is, in part, the result of acknowledging that the above-mentioned tripartite classification of actors is not totally operative in contexts where there is a high interdependence among them. As Kooiman (2002: 9-10) argues, most of the normative theories about the government-society interactions take for granted that

the state, market or civil society [...] are expected to deal with major societal issues by themselves and not in conjunction with one another. [...] One of the distinguishing features of this ideology is the supposition that the regulation of collective and public issues is the exclusive responsibility of the government (and/or the state), whereas market actors have limited (public) responsibility.

The ‘power dependence’ that comes from resource interdependence is the basis for the shared responsibility over public matters (Kooiman, 1993a). Sharing public responsibilities with private actors has, as immediate requirement, the establishment of channels for the exchange of information and other kind of resources with citizens, among which networks have a place of importance. In this way, governance as a policy-making model has been defined as a “network form of control” (Daly, 2003: 115), and as the set of interaction patterns that results from “self-organising” and “inter-organizational” networks (Rhodes, 1997: 15). As Rhodes (1996: 66) argues, conceptualising government-society interactions in terms of policy networks

can blur, even dissolve, the distinction between state and civil society.

The state becomes a collection of inter-organizational networks made

up of governmental and societal actors with no sovereign actor able to steer or regulate.

Here it may be pertinent to point out that the ‘blurring of boundaries’ mentioned by Rhodes (1996) can be interpreted in, basically, two ways. The first is the product of fuzzy edges between the sectors’ boundaries, which does not permit to make clear distinctions between them. The second corresponds to the image of the overlapping areas of influence, where we can distinguish actors according to sectors, but they operate in the same policy areas at the same time. In this way, the neighbourhood committees analysed in the following sections of the chapter display patterns of blurredness according to this second sense, while the citizens’ councils have ‘blurring boundaries’ according to the first one.

Governance theoretical understandings normally focus on the blurredness resulting from the interactions of policy and inter-organizational networks, and policy communities. Policy networks can be defined as the “ties” that exist between the “bodies relevant to a policy area” (Jordan, 1990: 333). They are typically formed of officials in position of defining policy and interest groups concerned with its outcome, or as Walker (1989: 2) says, by “policy professionals” and its “advocates”. Policy networks are the consequence of fragmentation and specialisation in policy-making, which gives them certain “sub-government” character (Campbell et al. 1989). They can be composed of individual officials, governmental departments, and citizens; however, when the network is mostly formed by both governmental and non-governmental organizations, policy networks are better defined as ‘inter-organizational’ networks (Rhodes, 1997). Policy and inter-organizational networks



usually function on an *ad hoc* basis, for their membership is relatively open, they are not very cohesive, and are established or dissolved according to specific policy issues that remain under the citizens' attention with varying time-spans (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). This kind of networks introduces a high degree of volatility in the government-society interactions, given that they are usually established and disbanded in short time periods and the matter of their exchanges is subject to continuous change.

When policy or inter-organizational networks consolidate themselves to the point of attaining a high level of continuity and stability in their interactions, they become policy communities (Rhodes, 1990). Unlike the mentioned networks, policy communities tend to be more restrictive in their membership; they display patterns of vertical interdependence based on shared responsibilities, and are insulated from other networks and the general public (*ibid.*). For purposes of simplicity, this chapter does not differentiate between policy and inter-organizational networks, assuming that they share basically the same kind of interactions with governmental institutions. Policy communities, on the other hand, display characteristics that make them closer to public-private organisations and, thus, are dealt with in a differentiated way. This is pointed out in the following sections of the chapter, where neighbourhood committees are treated separately to citizens' councils.

Governance theoretical frameworks argue that, from the government's perspective, policy networks and communities perform two main functions: on the one hand, they are instrumental in legitimising policy; on the other, they supply governmental institutions with resources that are not easily obtainable using conventional

governing methods. The first function is performed by policy networks and communities through the interactions among their members, which permit authorities to know *prima facie* the citizens' demands, make the necessary policy adjustments and definitions, and pool resources in order to sustain a given governmental programme or augment the acceptance to it (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). As Benington (2001: 204) argues, networks managed by government

may provide an opportunity to co-opt a wider range of potentially competing or conflicting interests into responsibility for governance and management of the increasing complex, cross-cutting problems facing society, and an alternative form of legitimation for the actions and the interventions of the state, given the erosion of confidence in elected representation (Benington, 2001: 204).

In this way, governance definitions assume a dynamic conceptualisation of legitimacy, where democratic elections and a general framework of legality are just the foundations over which acceptance of policy is built (King, 2003). Policy legitimacy is increasingly dependent from consensus-seeking and negotiation processes between the different fractions of the state and the interest groups (Jordan and Schubert, 1992). The acknowledgement of this need for policy negotiation with non-governmental actors is certainly not a novelty. What is innovative in governance understandings is the argument that, in a more fragmented polity, the policy areas that require these negotiation and consensus are more numerous. The more fragmented a government is, the more networking with citizens is required to generate policy "zones of acceptance" (Bogason and Toonen, 1998: 214). These



policy “zones of acceptance” are constructed by establishing direct exchanges between the fragmented governmental and non-governmental actors in order to incorporate them into the policy process (ibid.). In this sense, “modern policy-making” is “inter-organizational” by definition (Hanf and O’Toole, 1992: 167).

The second important function performed by policy networks and communities is to obtain resources that are not easily available when using traditional hierarchical methods of control. Usually, most of these resources are informational, and relate to citizens’ participation in the detection of problems, the design of policies, and the evaluation of their outcome, all of which has, ultimately, legitimising purposes (Bardach, 2001). However, there is an increasing trend to use networks’ resources in portions of the policy process that in the past were exclusive to government, such as the actual implementation of programmes (ibid.), or the pooling of monetary funds in order to finance public works (as the case studies suggest). Gulati and Gargiulo (1999) see in this combination of resources coming from diverse social-political actors a symptom of the ‘power dependence’ and interdependence that exist among them, which (in some policy sectors) can be severe. This interdependence, unlike traditional lobbying, establishes a multidirectional swapping of goods that cannot be easily catalogued as public or private (Van Waarden, 1992).

Networks’ resources are also relevant to the “problem solving capacity of the state under conditions of complexity and uncertainty” (Benington 2001: 210). Bringing together resources from the non-governmental actors immediately affected by a given problem can be helpful in its resolution. Networks can provide not only the necessary knowledge to address problems more efficiently, but also the

complementary resources required to accomplish a policy objective. This is important, for networks can provide not only the explanatory variable for government-society interactions that go beyond the aforementioned tripartite classification of actors, but they can also be the implementation units of policies that cannot be conveniently monitored or evaluated using traditional governmental systems (Milward and Provan, 1998). Social, family, and other kind of networks, for example, are currently used to reach persons Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in some western industrialised countries.

### *Networks in practice*

The literature on national and sub-national governance has analysed the incorporation of networks into policy processes in practice, and its conclusions point at some significant problems.

In the first place, there is the issue of the actual degree of networks' operation in policy processes, and their level of influence over them. After comparing several European cities, Le Gales (2002) points out that the mechanisms for citizens to be included in policy decisions are a basic feature of contemporary political discourse, but the actual power of networks to influence policy fluctuates according to several factors, such as the power of the network itself, the policy issue, the willingness of authorities to open up policy processes, and even the technical difficulties to translate users' demands into practice. Desai and Imrie (1998) argue that governments in India, and elsewhere, usually try to limit the influence of policy networks and communities by inviting citizens' involvement in non-strategic sectors, while the



important ones remain under the control of closed policy communities, formed almost exclusively by government officials. Governments prevent having policy networks and communities difficult to steer by controlling “seemingly neutral proceedings, like timing and conduct of meetings” of their members “to determine who gains access and under which conditions”. (Lowndes and Wilson, 2001: 639).

The governmental reticence to deal with very influential policy networks can be explained by the complex exchanges that they produce, which are difficult to manage (Benington, 2001). Networks’ interactions are generated in the context of their respective policy sectors, but one significant difficulty is how to link these interactions to the formal processes of policy-making and agenda setting while, at the same time, enabling an inclusive and participatory debate about these matters (Geddes and Rust, 2000). Most of the analysed literature assumes that there is a causal relationship between the growth of autonomy in inter-organizational networks and the deterioration of the governmental capacity to steer them. According to Rhodes (1995: 10) “integrated networks resist government steering, develop their own policies and mould their environments”. Inter-organizational networks do not respond to managers as if they were system controllers, but rather, these must adapt to the conditions of high fragmentation and act as facilitators of co-operation among the different social-political actors (*ibid.*).

In the second place, the analysed literature has pointed out that powerful policy networks and communities can compromise their accountability to the state, and even to society. It is interesting to note that, after the introduction of scrutiny committees and other participatory mechanisms in the UK and other countries,

some authors have argued that these devices can cause City Councils to be “more remote, not less” from society (Gaster, 2002: 110). As Benington (2001: 209) argues, the complex interactions present in powerful policy networks can generate “multiple lines of accountability” which usually imply “reporting to many, but final accountability to none”. The public–private structure of networks weakens accountability, it is argued, because it makes difficult to “establish a causal connection between damage done and culpable behaviour” (De Bruijn and Ringeling, 1999: 162). This is worsened in the case of influential policy communities because, claiming superiority of expertise, they can become real, semi-autonomous, “private governments” (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992: 200). These “private governments” can isolate themselves from the usual accountability mechanisms and, effectively, be out of reach from democratic control (Börzel, 1998).

This point offers an illustration of the importance of the theoretical approach of governance understandings. Authors such as Blair (2000) consider governance from a normative perspective, arguing that there is a linkage between citizens’ involvement in policy-making processes, and the improvement in effectiveness of public service delivery. His main assumption is that citizens’ participation is one of the main means to make governments accountable, although the actual results vary according to wider variables, such as the overall quality of the judiciary, fair elections, and free-press (*ibid.*). Blair proposes that citizens’ involvement in the political arena should be as numerous as possible (*ibid.*: 35). Nevertheless, his position contrasts with the conceptualisation of policy networks that warns against the possibility of them becoming a “law into themselves” (Clapham and Kintrea, 2000: 535) and the accountability related problems mentioned above.



This discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation and has to be addressed in a specific research evaluating the potential input of policy networks and communities in democratisation processes. To what extent influential networks damage accountability, and in doing so, impair democratic participation cannot be answered without reference to particular contexts. Here it suffices to say that, in theoretical terms, the citizens' involvement proposed by the literature on democratic local governance is understood in a broad manner, including ways of participation that go beyond the policy networks' limits (e.g. voting). We are dealing here with a subtle difference of approach: while the literature on democratic local governance (e.g. Blair, 2000; Lowndes and Wilson, 2001; Needham, 2002) deals with how to make local government accountable to society, the concern of the analysed governance understandings is how to make policy networks accountable to the state. If one thinks, like Rhodes (1997), that the state has fragmented itself to the point of becoming a collection of public-private policy networks, then making networks accountable to the state is a requirement to put states in a position to answer for their actions. If the legal framework that enforces accountability is unable to distinguish between the officials' decisions and the ones proceeding from non-governmental actors involved in policy-making, exclusively punishing or rewarding officials, it is in the same officials' best interest to assure that the policy networks generate decisions compatible with legality, the officials' policy strategies, and the good policy outcomes that voters expect from them. The problem lies in determining to what extent the citizens' involvement in policy decisions, which according to Blair (2000) helps to increase accountability levels by augmenting public awareness, is equal to the actions of policy networks and communities; or, in other words, how compatible are policy networks with civil society participation. Notwithstanding, as it was mentioned, this

cannot be properly answered without reference to concrete interactions of networks acting in concrete social-political contexts.

As it was said above, this problem is beyond the scope of this chapter. It, however, makes a brief consideration of the implications of networks' interactions in the overall capacity of municipalities to enforce accountability. The evidence discussed below suggests that policy networks in the studied municipalities cannot be made accountable for good or bad planning decisions, but their performance is under increasing scrutiny and supervision from local congresses and City Councils, especially when public funds are involved. This has reduced substantially the degree of freedom of choice of networks.

### **Policy networks and communities in the case studies**

Policy networks and communities have been constantly present in the Mexican post-revolutionary political system; nevertheless, in recent years they have become more open and important in a greater number of policy sectors. As Cabrero-Mendoza (2003a) argues, the use of the concept of network itself is relatively new in Mexican local government studies; however, there has been a long tradition of analyses that used network-like concepts, such as the *camarilla*, or informal political group, as explanatory factors in Mexican policy-making. Camp (1996) argues that in the times of the hegemonic party system, the *camarilla* (formed of like-minded politicians who sought to advance their respective political careers by mutual help) was an important ingredient of policy-making. This kind of informal network, formed mostly of authorities in the three levels of government, union and partisan officials, was a



closed community in which important policy decisions were made. These almost impenetrable circles used to establish clientelistic and corporatist networks with citizens to deal with the petitions concerning public services, especially the ones related to the introduction of services in poor neighbourhoods (Heredia, 1994). These networks could be affiliated to the PRI or a PRIísta union in order to ensure a fast-track treatment of their requests (ibid.).

Orizaba offers an example to illustrate the point. During most of the 1970s, the CROC developed an important influence over policy-making by negotiating candidacies to City Council seats in exchange of political support for the PRI<sup>86</sup>. Once they were members of the *Cabildo*, the new aldermen would maintain close relationships with the CROC president, Mr. Daniel Sierra Rivera. Petitioners, in order to resolve a problem under the jurisdiction of local government, would usually seek interviews with Don Daniel in addition to local officials. This suggests that, at least in this particular case, the CROC remained an influential member of the local policy-making community until the mid 1980s (Osegueda, 2000). A similar characteristic is identified by Espinoza-Valle (2000) for the state of Baja California, where local political dynamisms could no be explained without the influence exerted by the state branches of federal governmental agencies and unions. In León and Zacatecas, on the other hand, pro-PRI labour or peasants' unions did not develop such an influential role in local policy-making; in these municipalities, the main members of policy networks were the relevant local, state, and federal officials, the PRI bureaucrats, and the neighbourhood associations affiliated to the PRI<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Cuahua, J. Personal interview. Orizaba. 17<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>87</sup> Medina – Lizalde, J. L., and Muñoz – López, A. Personal interviews. Zacatecas, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001, and León, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2001 respectively.

Evidence collected at national level by Cabrero-Mendoza (1996, 1999b, 2000, 2000a, 2002, 2003b, and 2004a) shows that the decline of political partisanship and corporatism of the last two decades has been parallel to the emergence of policy networks and communities that match the above-mentioned literature's description more easily. In general, contemporary Mexican policy networks tend to be more open and inter-organizational than in the past. This means that their members are more diverse, including governmental officials of different levels and jurisdictions, private citizens, NGOs, and representatives of local commerce chambers. As it was mentioned in chapter two, the deterioration of partisan and corporatist control has coincided with the strengthening of the political centrality of the mayor, who circumvents traditional social representatives that, in the past, played a role in clientelistic exchanges with local authorities. A sort of 'soft' clientelism has appeared in many municipalities as a result, with the "strong patron" being the mayor, and in some cases the chiefs of departments and aldermen, and the "weak clients" all citizens (according to the classification of Schneider, 1992: 113).

The opening up of policy networks to citizens' participation has brought in some changes in the traditional role of local authorities and citizens. On the side of the local officials, there has been a shift in the discourse of the studied municipalities promoting citizens' participation as a means to democratise policy-making and implementation, improve public services by employing problem-solving strategies close to neighbours, and generating a social frame of mind in which government is no longer "expected to accomplish its mandate without the people's active



involvement”<sup>88</sup>. Local officials in León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas implement participatory programmes expecting citizens to join in; they, however, acknowledge that this required ‘active citizenship’ (Le Gales and John, 1997) is not always present among potential participants, given a natural scepticism about getting involved in consults and committees that, it is argued among some citizens, could give legitimacy to decisions taken beforehand in the City Hall. Participation, when it occurs, has become more transparent, but also more bureaucratised. The participatory mechanisms analysed below show a modification of the traditional informality of clientelistic networks established in the past (cf. Camp, 1996). In the process, citizens have increased their possibility of influencing some policy sectors.

The following sections of the chapter analyse three public-private participatory bodies introduced in the case studies, namely, the Neighbourhood Committees, the Committees of Public Works, and the Citizens’ Councils. I consider first the norms and general conditions of their functioning, and then continue with an analysis of their influence on policy decisions.

#### *Neighbourhood Committees and Committees of Public Works*

Neighbourhood Committees (NCs) and Committees of Public Works (CPWs) are basically citizens’ policy networks established and supervised by municipal officials, with the objective of including citizens in the decisions on public services directly

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<sup>88</sup> Briseño, F., Guerrero, H., Escudero–Stadelmann, A., and Medina – Lizalde, J. L. Personal interviews. Orizaba, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001; León, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001; Orizaba, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001; and Zacatecas, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001; respectively. The quote belongs to the first interviewee.



affecting them. NCs have different names in the studied municipalities (*Neighbours' Committee* in León, *Community Committee* in Orizaba, and *Committee of Social Participation* in Zacatecas), but they basically perform the same functions. The CPW (*Comité de Obra Pública*) is an *ad hoc* NC established to supervise the completion of a specific public work carried out with public-private funding. Normally, once the public work is completed the CPW is dissolved.

Both NCs and CPWs have as immediate antecedent the National Programme of Solidarity (PRONASOL). The programme was intended as a palliative measure to complement neo-liberal federal policies during the administration of president Salinas (1988-1994). It modified some of the traditional clientelistic practices substituting them with a community-based approach; instead of favouring some neighbourhoods, or sections of them, on the basis of partisan or corporatist priorities, public services were introduced to rural communities or marginalised neighbourhoods in urban municipalities using poverty-reduction criteria (Dresser, 1997). This was done under two conditions: the basic urbanisation public works were funded mostly by federal money, administered through a structure that was parallel to the state and municipal levels of government; and citizens were expected to complement federal funds with unpaid labour or fees given in instalments. Citizens' participation was co-ordinated through the *Committees of Solidarity* (CoS), which were very similar to the current NCs and CPWs.

In practice, PRONASOL revitalised the PRI and the federal agencies at the expense of local governments as providers of public services, for it offered an alternative source of funding through which organised citizens could circumvent local



authorities unwilling or unable to finance improvements in basic urbanisation services (Assies and Ramírez, 1999). During President Zedillo's administration (1994–2000) the CoS were disbanded. However, in 1997, the new federal congress decided to decentralise branch 33 funds, especially FAIS, and supervise them using mechanisms of citizens' participation. As a result, most states decided to implement variants of the CoS, producing the present NCs and CPWs. Unlike the CoS, present-day committees have strengthened the mayor's political position, for they allow him/her to have an intensive communication with deprived neighbourhoods and to co-opt potentially dissenting citizens' groups, while, at the same time, introducing public services to undersupplied communities.

The LFC, mentioned in chapter two, explicitly states that when municipalities receive FAIS transfers, they must incorporate citizens into policy decisions. Local officials must

- 1) Let the inhabitants know the amount of transfers received, the planned public works, the cost of each one, and where they will be done; 2) promote the participation of the benefited communities in the programming, implementation, supervision, control, and assessment of the public works funded by the FAIS of branch 33; 3) inform citizens about the results; 4) inform SEDESOL about the spending, and 5) plan public works compatible with the government's environmental criteria (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 2002a, art. 33).

Supervision of these procedures is left in the hands of local congresses, which in their turn report results to the SEDESOL. Thus, in their own interest, state

congresses have modified their *Organic Municipal Laws* (OMLs) to ensure that the functioning of NCs and CPWs follows the rules of the LFC. In this way, the OMLs of the three states to which the examined municipalities belong have explicit references to NCs and CPWs, being the state of Zacatecas the most specific regarding their functioning (Estado de Guanajuato, 2002; Estado de Veracruz—Llave, 2002; and Estado de Zacatecas, 2002). In addition to the federal and state regulations, León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas have published sets of guidelines for NCs and CPWs, which are intended to be reviewed at the start of each administration.

NCs are usually composed of a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 elected members, using the neighbourhood as the basic territorial unit. The actual size of the neighbourhood, and thus the number of represented inhabitants per NC, varies in the three case studies. In León, the Department of Social Development (DSD) calls for the election of a NC if it can represent a minimum of 500 families, or 1,500 inhabitants (COPLADEM, 2002). In Orizaba and Zacatecas, on the other hand, it is left to the discretion of the DSD and the Department of Citizens' Participation (DCP), respectively, to establish the ratio between represented population and number of NCs<sup>89</sup>. Usually, the DSD or the DCP summons a neighbourhood meeting, using the radio or the distribution of leaflets, announcing the election of a NC. In the election day, a municipal official organises the voting among the

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<sup>89</sup> The DSD of Orizaba organises NCs according to the following list of territorial units, all of them with the right to elect a NC: 55 neighbourhoods (medium/upper class or commercial zones), 22 working-class neighbourhoods (*barrios*), 28 council houses' units (*unidades habitacionales*), 14 irregular neighbourhoods (slums or shanty-towns, *fraccionamientos populares*), and 416 *vecindades*, self-contained buildings with several families living in them (Alvarado- Morales, J. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001). Thus, it is not unusual that there can be a NC for as few as 100/120 families (Espinoza de los Monteros, I. Personal interview. Orizaba. 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001). Zacatecas uses a territorial system based on the traditional limits of its 198 neighbourhoods or *barrios* (Ortíz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003).



neighbours present, who elect a president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a varying number of voting members in charge of assessing the quality of public services in the neighbourhood. In order to be elected a NC member, the three municipalities require citizens not to be municipal bureaucrats, politicians currently in office, religious ministers, or political parties' officials. In addition, León expects NC officials to be property owners in the neighbourhood. NC members are usually elected for one-year periods, with the possibility of re-election; the posts are *ad honorem* (without any stipend), although members usually expect to receive some secretarial support from the municipal departments dealing with citizens' participation (COPLADEM, 2002; Alvarado-Morales, J., and Ortíz, O. Personal interviews; Orizaba, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001; and Zacatecas, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003, respectively).

Formally, the responsibilities of NCs are six: They must a) consult neighbours about public services' priorities, b) propose public works to municipal departments, c) evaluate the quality of public services, d) participate in citizens' councils, e) inform neighbours, in public meetings carried out every three months, about the public works done in the neighbourhood, and, in the case of CPWs, f) to supervise that public works with public-private funding are completed on time (COPLADEM, 2002; Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999b; H. Ayuntamiento de Zacatecas, 2001; Alvarado-Morales, J., and Ortíz, O. Personal interviews; Orizaba, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001; and Zacatecas, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003, respectively). NCs are expected to prioritise public works needed in the neighbourhood, including the introduction of undersupplied services or their improvement, and submit that list at the beginning of the year. Once priorities are set and submitted to the DSD or DCP, NCs continue functioning during the year as linkages between municipal departments and neighbours. NC

members usually have monthly meetings in the City Hall where they are briefed on the government's actions, and attend seminars organised by voting member areas in which departmental directors are present. In the case of León, between 60 and 80 per cent of NC officials usually attended these meetings during the first third of the administration<sup>90</sup>. In Orizaba and Zacatecas, it is only NC presidents who are expected to be in close contact with municipal staff members. The three municipalities, however, require NC members to organise the mayor's visits to their respective neighbourhoods. It is usual that the mayor visits one, and sometimes two, neighbourhoods per week during the year.

CPWs are elected and function in similar ways to the NCs, but under a considerable level of supervision. After the election is completed, an official memorandum is written, certified by the municipal official present, and sent to the state congress, where a file on the municipality's works by co-operation is opened. Once the CPW agrees on the public work that is going to be requested from local authorities, a signed statement is also sent to the local congress, attaching a technical file (made by the DSD, DCP, or the corresponding municipal department) containing a description of the work to be done, costs, contractors to be hired, and its specific modality of public-private funding<sup>91</sup>. After that, the project enters a waiting list. When the City Council has approved the public work to be included in the yearly budget, the municipality prints promissory notes that are distributed by the CPW among the neighbours. The usual is that the FAIS pays 80 percent of the cost and

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<sup>90</sup> Ramírez, A. Personal interview. León. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J., Ramírez, A., and Ortiz, O. Personal interviews. Orizaba, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001; León, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002; and Zacatecas, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003, respectively.



neighbours the rest, although there are other modalities of co-operation<sup>92</sup>. Sometimes the municipality buys the material and neighbours do the work. In any case, neighbours have the right to negotiate their own instalment interval (usually monthly). In Orizaba for example, by 2001, neighbours were asked to pay 75 pesos per square meter of new paving (approximately £5.00) and were given a year or more to do it<sup>93</sup>. CPW's members do not deal with neighbours' payments directly, for these have to be done in the Municipal Treasury.

The CPW's perform an informal supervisory role, in addition to the formal inspections made by local officials. If the public work is not completed according to the timetable submitted by the contractor, CPW's can complain to the DSD or DCP. Finally, when the work is completed, a final report is sent to the local congress and the CPW is dissolved. In its turn, once per year the local congress examines the way in which the municipality made use of federal transfers and citizens' contributions, and confirms that the public works were in effect completed<sup>94</sup>.

#### NCs and CPW's performance

In general, it appears that establishing NCs and CPW's is relatively easy for the three studied municipalities, regardless of the size of neighbourhoods or administrative structures necessary to run them. The proportion of neighbourhoods with a NC is

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<sup>92</sup> In León the percentage is 70–30 or even 50-50 (Conde, L. E. Personal interview. León. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2002). In other municipalities in the North of the country the funding is tripartite: 60-30-10 per cent from the FAIS, the municipality, and citizens respectively (Arana-Murrieta, 1998).

<sup>93</sup> Espinoza de los Monteros, I. Personal interview. Orizaba. 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>94</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J., Ramírez, A., and Ortiz, O. Personal interviews. Orizaba, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001; León, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002; and Zacatecas, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003, respectively.

high in the three municipalities, ranging from 60.32 per cent (León) to 75.25 per cent (Zacatecas). León is the municipality with the highest number of NC officials (2,250), although proportionately, Zacatecas has more (745 or 0.60 per cent of its population). In total, León has established 450 NCs, while Orizaba and Zacatecas have 80 and 149 respectively (see table 15). The high percentage of NCs suggests that, at least initially, citizens' participation is facilitated by the expectation of obtaining improvements in public services. Thus, participation is potentially higher in neighbourhoods of lower socio-political strata, where is more probable to find deficient public services' coverage. This general impression was confirmed by key interviewees, who complained about the difficulties experienced in neighbourhoods with good-quality services to establish NCs and get their members to attend City Hall meetings<sup>95</sup>. As one interviewee put it, "affluent people do not participate in Neighbourhood Committees"<sup>96</sup> for, among other reasons, they usually have formal jobs (i.e. not in the informal economy) and cannot get involved in activities that normally take place during office-hours<sup>97</sup>.

**Table 15. Number of neighbourhood committees compared to total number of neighbourhoods and population\***

	León	Orizaba	Zacatecas
Population**	1,134,842	118,593	123,899
Neighbourhoods or territorial units entitled to elect a NC	746	119 ***	198
NCs	450	80	149
Percentage of neighbourhoods with NCs	60.32	67.23	75.25
Number of NC members	2,250	320	745
Percentage of inhabitants that are members of NCs	0.20	0.27	0.60

Source: own calculations and data from Goytia-Robles, 2000; H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Orizaba, 2001; H Ayuntamiento de León, 2002; INAFED 2002, and

<sup>95</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J., Conde, L. E., and Ortiz, O. Personal interviews. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001, León. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2002, and Zacatecas. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002 respectively.

<sup>96</sup> Ramírez, A. Personal interview. León. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>97</sup> Muñoz – López, A. Personal interview. León. 19<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



personal interviews. **Notes:** \* CPW's are not considered, \*\*the population figures are for 2000, \*\*\**vecindades* are not considered.

While the three municipalities keep records about the number of NCs and their members, they lack precise accounts on the percentage of NCs officials that actually get involved in the required activities, such as attending neighbourhood and City Hall meetings, and how this participation rate has changed with time. This information gap has to be addressed by a specific research, possibly involving long periods of participatory observation in the three municipalities, in order to be able to link the participation rate in the committees to the NCs actual level of influence over policy. However, the evidence collected in interviews and in the primary and secondary literature suggests that participation in the NCs of the three case studies peaked by the late 1990s and currently, although still important, is decreasing.

In the decade between 1990 and 2000, León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas experienced a noticeable improvement in their coverage of basic urbanisation services. In 1990, the three municipalities had a combined average of 91.72 per cent of households with potable water in the property, electricity, and toilet facilities connected to sewers (either street sewers or septic tanks). Zacatecas had the highest percentage of these services' coverage (93.50), while in León only 88.94 per cent of households had the three of them. Regarding single services, Zacatecas had the highest rate of provision of any of the three mentioned, with 96.61 per cent of households having electricity supply. León, on the other hand, had the lowest, with 14.29 per cent of households lacking access to sewers (see table 16).

By 2000, the studied municipalities had improved particularly in the number of houses connected to sewers (León augmented in 5.40 percentage points, while

Orizaba and Zacatecas increased their coverage in 4.47 and 5.78 percentage points, respectively). That decade's administrations also augmented their electricity supply and their respective potable water networks (in the latter service, León and Zacatecas improved their coverage in less than a percentage point, but Orizaba increased it in 6.25 points, which is the highest growth rate of any of the three services). In 2000, the provision of potable water, electricity, and sewers were high in the three cases, especially in Orizaba, where 97.06 per cent of households had access to the three services (in Zacatecas the percentage of provision was 95.97 and in León, 92.67) (see table 16). The national trend towards the increase of the provision of basic urban services in the first half of the 1990s is explained, in part, by the PRONASOL and its approach based on the introduction of infrastructure services. The CoS, and later in that decade the NCs and CPWs, were instrumental in this increase, although the actual services receiving high priority varied according to local conditions, like the agenda of first-time opposition administrations, or the overall quality of public services in the municipality.

**Table 16. Percentages of households with basic urban services in the case studies, 1990 and 2000**

Municipality	Total number of households	Households with potable water (in the property)	Households with electricity	Households with toilets connected to sewers*	Combined average of the three services
<b>1990</b>					
León	100.00	88.21	92.90	85.71	88.94
Orizaba	100.00	89.80	96.01	92.35	92.72
Zacatecas	100.00	95.13	96.61	88.77	93.50
<b>2000</b>					
León	100.00	89.19	97.70	91.11	92.67
Orizaba	100.00	96.05	98.31	96.82	97.06
Zacatecas	100.00	95.17	98.21	94.54	95.97
<b>1990-2000 growth in percentage points</b>					
León		0.98	4.79	5.40	3.72
Orizaba		6.25	2.30	4.47	4.34
Zacatecas		0.04	1.60	5.78	2.47

Source: own calculations on INEGI (2005). Note: \* Includes street sewers and septic tanks.



Taking in account these provision percentages, one can have a rough indicator of participation and involvement levels in NCs, given that their main concern has been usually to expedite the introduction of urban infrastructure. In this way, León has a potential for higher participation in neighbourhood committees than Orizaba, for in the first municipality 7.33 per cent of households did not have access to potable water, electricity, and sewers in 2000, while in the second only 2.94 per cent of households were in the same situation.

In León, citizens' participation in NCs and CPWs has been significant since it was introduced in the late 1980s (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996, 1999b), although it appears that it has diminished in recent years. The first 72 NCs were established in the municipality in 1989, and at one point they functioned simultaneously with the CoS. By 1994 there were 200 NCs (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996: 82), and in 2001 there were 450<sup>98</sup>. During the first complete administration in which the NC programme was implemented (1991-1994), the 200 NCs had a total of 1,093 individual and collective meetings with municipal officials, or 5.4 meetings per NC in the three-year period (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996: 82). In the studied administration (2000-2003), participation in City Hall meetings fluctuated between 60 and 80 per cent, as it was mentioned<sup>99</sup>, which means that an average of 1,575 NCs officials had interaction with the DSD in order to establish neighbourhoods' priorities in services and request specific public works.

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<sup>98</sup> Ramírez, A. Personal interview. León. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

In 2002, when the administration had completed its first half, 2,644 meetings of NCs officials and their neighbours had been conducted (an average of 5.8 meetings per NC in a year and a half), in addition to 564 informative assemblies in the City Hall (including seminars with departmental staff), and 350 *ad hoc* participatory diagnostic meetings (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2002). Nevertheless, if measured by the number of new households with basic urban infrastructure services, the aforementioned officials' actions produced a 0.30 increase in electricity supply and a 2 per cent augment in the number of houses with toilet facilities connected to street sewers<sup>100</sup>, which is considerably lower than the growth experienced in the 1990s. By 2002, the administration had been able to complete only 30 per cent of the public works prioritised by the NCs, many of which consisted of the introduction of basic infrastructure services, such as paving<sup>101</sup>.

It is true that the completion of public works does not depend solely from the participation of NCs and CPWs, for the amount of transfers and the capacities of local officials play a more important role<sup>102</sup>. However, NCs have lost some of their initial appeal as an efficient means to channel citizens' demands, for the link between participation in them and public works carried out has become less apparent with time (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999b). The complex participation system of León might be showing the first signs of exhaustion, given that public services do not improve at the same rate or speed at which NCs are established: there are more NCs than in the mid 1990s, but not more completed public works (*ibid.*). It is symptomatic that by

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<sup>100</sup> Pedroza, J. R. (2003). "Garantiza LEA continuidad en proyectos estratégicos". *El Heraldo de León*, 11<sup>th</sup> September.

<sup>101</sup> Conde, L. E. Personal interview. León. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>102</sup> Silva, A. (2003). "Quedarán inconclusas obras públicas". *El Heraldo de León*, 18<sup>th</sup> September.



the end of the 2000-2003 government, the Integral System of Public Transport (SIT) –the main urban project of the administration– was criticised for not being consistent with the priorities defined in the NCs and in other consultations<sup>103</sup>. Discrepancy between decisions reached in NCs and the municipal policies, in the long term, discourages involvement in such participatory mechanisms.

Citizens' monetary contributions to public works have also begun to decrease. In the period between 2000 and 2002, branch 33 transfers represented roughly one fifth of León's income. This is relevant for, as it was mentioned in chapter two, the municipality is compelled to consult NCs in order to prioritise the use of the FAIS, which can only be employed in potable water systems, sewers, paving, electricity supply, basic health and education infrastructure, drainage systems, and agriculture-related public works (Campos–Orozco, and Lazos–García, 2001). Although most of León's branch 33 income is composed of FAIS funds, it is unclear how much of it was actually spent in new public works and not just maintenance of existing services, and therefore, the real level of influence of NCs over policy-making is difficult to determine. A better way to measure private input in policy implementation is the number of public works financed by public-private co-operation. As it can be seen in table 17, the relative importance of citizens' contributions in León have decreased from 0.33 per cent of gross income in 1998 to 0.06 in 2002, which is below the national average that has gone from 0.52 to 0.39 per cent in the same period (see table 8). Despite that the model of León is one of the main reference points for

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<sup>103</sup> Meléndez, F. (2003). "Interrumpe ciudadano a autoridades durante sesión de información SIT". *El Heraldo de León*, 18<sup>th</sup> September. The SIT aims at unifying the routes, ticket prices, and regulations of all public transport means in the municipality, including buses, micro-buses, and the construction of a train-like bus system using the central lanes of the main avenue in the city. See also Silva, A. (2003). "Quedarán inconclusas obras públicas". *El Heraldo de León*, 18<sup>th</sup> September.

citizens' participation at national level (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999b) the contributions made by neighbours have never exceeded 1.5 percentage points of the municipality's gross income (INEGI, 2005). The fact that citizens' contributions are diminishing in relative terms suggests a reduction of participation levels in NCs and CPWs, or a growth rate that has not kept pace with the increase of transfers and local income.

It is interesting to note that, while the citizens' contributions have diminished their relative importance if compared with other sources of municipal income, some neighbours that do co-operate with authorities are beginning to pay a higher share of the public services' cost. In the 1990s it was customary to have citizens pay 30 per cent of the cost of a public work, which was higher than the national average; but during the administration of mayor Ayala-Torres the proportion rose to 50 per cent in some neighbourhoods considered not so poor. In 2002, the Trust for Public Works by Co-operation (FIDOC) reported having spent 55 million pesos (approximately £3,660,600 at the time) in, mainly, paving 64 streets under a combined scheme of 70-30 and 50-50 shares<sup>104</sup>. In 2003, the FIDOC announced that in the 2000-2003 administration, a total of 223 streets had been paved at a cost of 221 million pesos (roughly £14,730,300), out of which 84 million had been given by citizens<sup>105</sup>. This means that citizens, organised through NCs and CPWs, supplied roughly 38 per cent of the cost of introducing basic urban infrastructure services in the municipality, which is considerably higher than what was asked from neighbours in Orizaba and Zacatecas.

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<sup>104</sup> El Sol de León. (2002). "Este año se pavimentarán menos calles que en 2001". *El Sol de León*, 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

<sup>105</sup> El Heraldo de León. (2003). "Entrega edil más obras de pavimentación". *El Heraldo de León*, 12<sup>th</sup> September.



The important issue here is that local authorities in the studied administration treated León's citizens as clients, in the sense that their incapacity or unwillingness to pay the required fee was now more significant than in the past to determine the feasibility of public works, just because the citizens' share was larger. There is anecdotal evidence that suggests that communities unable to contribute with their share did not receive expedite attention of their requests<sup>106</sup>. In addition, the studied administration displayed a significant tendency to differentiate potential beneficiaries of co-operation funding schemes by socio-economic stratum, asking for higher citizens' contributions when it was considered feasible<sup>107</sup>. In this sense, the picture resulting from this research is compatible with the initial analyses of León's PANista administrations during the 1990s, which characterised them as exemplars of the "municipality-enterprise", i.e. a local government where NPM criteria is implemented (Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996: 53). Finally, Mr. Ayala-Torres's administration limited CPWs involvement to paving, basically, while at the same time, he promoted NCs actions in a sectoral (not territorial) basis. One example of this new approach is the administration's security programme, which linked policemen working in neighbourhoods with their respective NCs in order to obtain better information and invite young men to join a new police corps specialised in dealing with gangs (Cabrero-Mendoza et al., 2001).

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<sup>106</sup> Alderete, A. (2002). "Molesta a guajeños olvido de autoridades municipales". *El Sol de León*, 23rd May.

<sup>107</sup> See Domínguez, E. (2001). "1,600 mdp para obras públicas en Guanajuato". *El Heraldo de León*, 9th September; Velázquez, L. (2001). "9.8 mdp para obras municipales". *El Heraldo de León*, 9th September; and Velázquez, L. (2003). "León con la mejor policía: LEA". *El Heraldo de León*, 19th September.

Table 17. Federal transfers and citizens' contributions as percentages of gross income in the case studies, 1998 - 2002

Municipality	Year	Gross income	Federal transfers		Citizens' contributions
			Branch 28 (participaciones)	Branch 33 (aportaciones)	
León	1998	100.00	37.18	6.18	0.33
	1999	100.00	26.46	0.00	0.23
	2000	100.00	38.87	25.65	0.21
	2001	100.00	37.27	22.43	0.03
	2002	100.00	28.46	20.49	0.06
Orizaba	1998	100.00	66.97	0.00	1.40
	1999	100.00	66.34	0.00	1.83
	2000	100.00	70.02	0.00	2.32
	2001	100.00	45.95	17.95	0.64
	2002	100.00	36.50	16.45	0.14
Zacatecas	1998	100.00	58.51	0.00	0.00
	1999	100.00	61.60	0.42	0.00
	2000	100.00	47.14	26.03	0.00
	2001	100.00	48.67	25.91	0.00
	2002	100.00	42.41	27.48	0.00

Source: own elaboration on data from INEGI (2005).

Unlike the case of León, Orizaba's administrations have been hardly analysed in depth by the Mexican literature on local governance (the only relevant studies being Osegueda, 2000; and Velázquez–García, 1999). For that reason, and because the municipality does not publish its records on attendance to activities organized by the DSD, it is difficult to establish the level of participation in NCs and CPWs and their influence in policy-making. Nevertheless, there is evidence that indicates that participation levels were high during the 1990s like in León, as the result of an aggressive policy focused on introducing basic urbanisation services. During the PRIísta administration (2001-2004) local authorities changed their approach, emphasising the advisory role of NCs and reducing the share of citizens'



contributions to fund the introduction of public services, generating in the process a governance style different to that of León.

The fact that by 2000 Orizaba had the best provision of basic urbanisation services (97.06 per cent of households with potable water, electricity, and sewers) and the highest growth rate of these services among the case studies (4.34 percentage points in the previous decade) –see table 16- is compatible with interviewees' information that participation in CoS first, and in NCs and CPWs afterwards, was high during the 1990s<sup>108</sup>. By 'high' I mean that slightly more than 50 per cent of the 320 NCs officials of the municipality regularly attended meetings convened by the DSD<sup>109</sup>. This was helpful for the rapid coverage of basic infrastructure services, for the municipality is small (40.06 square kilometres), the population is not so large as the one of León or Zacatecas (INAFED, 2004), and the two consecutive PANista administrations (1995-2000) complemented their efforts to pave and introduce water and sewers at the same time<sup>110</sup>. The PRIísta administration in 2001 found the municipality with only 2.94 of households lacking basic services, and with the highest HDI of the three case studies (INAFED, 2004) which explains the kind of requests received in the *Citizens' Audiences*, more oriented to ensure access to employment, education, or training than to basic infrastructure services, as it was mentioned in chapter three.

Differently from León, Orizaba has managed to obtain a higher proportion of branch 28 funds (*participaciones*) which, as it was mentioned in chapter two, are not earmarked for specific services but are intended to cover any kind of municipal

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<sup>108</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>109</sup> Espinoza de los Monteros, I. Personal interview. Orizaba. 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>110</sup> Escudero – Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

expense as long as it is approved by the City Council. 66.97 per cent of Orizaba's income was composed of branch 28 funds in 1998; while in 2000 it peaked, reaching 70.02 per cent. These percentages are well above the national average that in 1998 was of 62.20 and in 2000, 68.72 per cent considering branch 28 *and* 33 together (see tables 17 and 8). In exchange for this privileged treatment from the governor and the local congress, between 1998 and 2000 the municipality did not receive any funds from branch 33 and therefore, it was not obliged by law to establish NCs, consult citizens about neighbourhood's priorities, or report on specific public works to the local congress. Nevertheless, the PANista administrations decided to implement León's NCs model and establish CPWs because this party had as a strategic priority the completion of highly visible public works (like paving) <sup>111</sup>, and in order to accomplish this, it needed citizens' contributions.

Between 1998 and 2000, citizens' contributions to public works went from 1.40 to 2.32 per cent of Orizaba's income, which are well above the national averages. Particularly important is the relative weight of citizens' contributions in 2000, which is almost five times the corresponding national average (see tables 17 and 8). This is important, for the 1995-1997 and 1998-2000 administrations expected citizens to collaborate in the public works' cost in a significant way, as the analysed administration in León. On the other hand, the 'New PRI' administration of Mr. Cabrera-Zavaleta relied on lower amounts of federal transfers, which were given to the municipality in branch 28 and branch 33 funds. In 2001 and 2002, 17.95 and 16.45 per cent of Orizaba's income consisted of branch 33 funds, respectively. The total of federal transfers during the first half of the PRIísta administration

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<sup>111</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.



represented 63.9 per cent (2001) and 52.95 per cent (2002) of total income, which were lower than in the two preceding administrations<sup>112</sup>. As a complementing strategy, Mr. Cabrera-Zavaleta augmented local revenue in order to be able to diminish citizens' contributions. In this way, these contributions have decreased to 0.64 and 0.14 per cent in 2001 and 2002 respectively; percentages that are similar to those found in León (see table 17).

Citizens' contributions are diminishing, which suggests a decreasing level of participation in NCs and CPWs. This phenomenon, however, appears to be linked to the lower infrastructure needs of Orizaba and to a policy shift conducted during the first year of the PRI's administration. In 2001, public works began to be funded almost exclusively using federal transfers and local income, with a lower financial participation of citizens. As a consequence, the influence of most NCs and CPWs has been limited to advisory and supervisory roles, with the *locus* of decision-making being fundamentally within the municipality's bureaucracy. As an interviewee put it, "power is to be exercised, not to be shared"<sup>113</sup>, and Orizaba's officials have stressed the constitutional mandate of public service provision regardless of citizens' willingness or capacity to contribute with funds. In this way, public works funded by branch 33 are advertised with few references to the participation of NCs, emphasising the mayor's position as main negotiator of transfers with state and federal governments. In 2002, local newspapers reported the completion of 56 public works during 2001 and the first half of 2002, including 18 newly paved streets, all financed using 40 million pesos coming from branch 33 (approximately £2,600,600).

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<sup>112</sup> This, by the way, appears to dismiss the two PANista mayors' argument that the PRIísta governor of Veracruz favoured municipal governments of his party in detriment of opposition local governments.

<sup>113</sup> Cruz –Arellano, E. Personal interview, Orizaba. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001.

at the time)<sup>114</sup>. In addition, they indicate the use of a fund of 100,000 pesos (roughly £6,600) for direct donations to poor families<sup>115</sup>. During 2003 and 2004, the overall rate of public works appears to have diminished, although there was a more explicit focus on schools' facilities<sup>116</sup>. In the mentioned newspaper articles, there is no mention of a link between the performance of NCs and completed public works.

In general terms, the approach of this administration to NCs and CPWs as policy networks is rather traditional, if compared to the PANista administrations of León and Orizaba. Here, the citizens' committees perform a legitimising role through, mostly, informational resources: they give the necessary problem-solving knowledge on what are the neighbourhood's needs to the authorities and, in exchange, local officials prioritise public works accordingly, giving, in the process, information to NCs on the overall strategies of the municipality to which the ordinary citizen does not have access<sup>117</sup>.

Zacatecas City, like Orizaba, has few references in the literature on Mexican local governance, and the existing ones focus mostly on the legal dimensions of citizens' participation mechanisms, given that Zacatecas is one of the small number of states

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<sup>114</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "Entregan autoridades dos obras más de infraestructura educativa". *Orizaba en Red*, 18th November; Orizaba en Red (2002). "Inaugura alcalde obras por más de 3 millones de pesos". *Orizaba en Red*, 30th December; and Santos–Carrera, J. (2002). "II Informe de Gobierno por parte del alcalde". *Orizaba en Red*, 19th December.

<sup>115</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "Dispondría Ayuntamiento de 100 mil Pesos para Apoyo de Familias". *Orizaba en Red*, 13th December.

<sup>116</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Entregan autoridades infraestructura educativa por más de 1 millón de pesos". *Orizaba en Red*, 27th October; Orizaba en Red (2003). "Entregó ayer alcalde orizabeño mobiliario a cuatro escuelas de la ciudad". *Orizaba en Red*, 17th December; Orizaba en Red (2003). "Inauguran autoridades paquete de obras por 2 millones 398 mil pesos". *Orizaba en Red*, 19th December; Orizaba en Red (2004). "Inauguran autoridades obras por 3.5 mdp en beneficio de 12 mil ciudadanos". *Orizaba en Red*, 1st October; Orizaba en Red (2004). "Entregan autoridades el último paquete de obras a los ciudadanos". *Orizaba en Red*, 14th December.

<sup>117</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19th December 2001.



that have modified their OML to incorporate NCs into the municipal-wide planning of public works and the elaboration of the MDP (cf. Cabrero-Mendoza et al., 2001). In addition to this literature gap, the municipality does not publish the attendance rates of its 745 NC members to activities organised by the DCP, which makes it difficult to establish the levels of actual participation and influence over policy. This is particularly problematic because Zacatecas, in spite of implementing co-operative schemes in public works, does not collect monetary contributions from citizens, which are an approximate measure of neighbours' direct involvement in micro policy-making and implementation. Of the three cases, Zacatecas is the most difficult to classify because it has not established an entrepreneurial approach to lack of funds (like León), but it has neither resorted to federal transfers to diminish the amount of citizens' contributions (like Orizaba). Zacatecas has combined a traditional approach to policy-making through NCs with a significant reliance on neighbours' unpaid labour in order to lower the costs of public works.

During the 1990s, Zacatecas had the lowest growth rate of basic urban infrastructure of the three cases (2.47 percentage points) which gave this municipality in 2000 a coverage of 95.97 per cent of households with access to potable water, electricity, and sewers (see table 16). This means that if Zacatecas did not have at the time the greater rates of service provision present in Orizaba, it neither had the considerable needs of León, where 7.33 per cent of households lacked basic urban services. With 4.03 per cent of the population lacking access to basic services, one could expect a potentially greater participation than the one present in Orizaba. The growth in the access to sewers, which in the mentioned decade was of 5.78 percentage points (just second to potable water in Orizaba), suggests that participation was indeed

considerable in the 1990s (see table 16). This is, in part, explained by the PRONASOL national policy of favouring the paving of streets, and with it the introduction of potable water and sewers (Dresser, 1997). More importantly, from the mid 1998-2001 administration, the municipality began to receive branch 33 funds in a proportion higher than in Orizaba and León, reaching in average more than one forth of its revenue (see table 17). This indicates a considerable level of NCs and CPWs participation; even it was only for purposes of providing information on the neighbourhoods' priorities. According to the mayor, slightly less than 40 per cent of the public works proposed by the NCs was in fact completed during the administration<sup>118</sup>.

Unlike León and Orizaba, Zacatecas has made an explicit policy of not charging fees to users for the introduction of new public services, which is the reason why the municipality did not receive any citizens' contributions between 1998 and 2002 (see table 17). It is true that co-operative schemes have been implemented; requiring citizens to repay between 20 and 30 per cent of the value of public works, but this is done mostly through the unpaid labour of directly benefited users<sup>119</sup>. Mr. Goytia-Robles, the mayor, has pointed out that here lies one the most problematic issues in the private-public schemes of collaboration, for NC requests are not normally made with "an attached payment at the same time" and thus, there is an important time gap between NC consultations and the actual completion of the public work, because the proper funds have to be secured first<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup> Goytia – Robles, P. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>119</sup> Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.



This PRD administration, for example, has conducted the cleansing of sewers and rivers with the co-operation of volunteers<sup>121</sup>, and has signed agreements with unions of street vendors, issuing permits to sell in the historic centre of the city in exchange of the nightly sweeping of the streets in which the flea-markets establish during the day<sup>122</sup>. By the end of the administration, it was customary for the municipality to give either half of the materials or half the hours-men of labour necessary to complete the public work in poor neighbourhoods<sup>123</sup>. Finally, the studied administration also resorted to subsidising staple food products in order to improve general conditions in neighbourhoods. The Programme of Dairy Products for the General Population (PALPA) was especially important, selling 95,000 litres of milk per month plus a variable quantity of cheeses at 20 per cent of the market value. This benefited more than 31,000 families in 56 neighbourhoods (Cabrero–Mendoza, et al., 2001).

The introduction of NCs and CPWs in the policy-making and implementation of services in areas financed by branch 33 transfers, or in need for complementary monetary resources from citizens, has augmented the blurredness between the traditional roles of local authorities and public service users. As the NC and CPW systems have been consolidated, it has become increasingly difficult to establish the limits of the respective influence of municipal officials, on the one hand, and committees' members, on the other, in the definition of policy priorities for neighbourhoods. However, in a general way, the three case studies display a higher level of citizens' influence over policy-making at micro level than in the times of the

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<sup>121</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). "Desazolva alcantarillados y arroyos del municipio". *Momento de Zacatecas*, 8th June.

<sup>122</sup> Momento de Zacatecas (1999). "Pepenadores y tianguistas a favor de una ciudad limpia". *Momento de Zacatecas*, 24th June.

<sup>123</sup> El Sol de Zacatecas. (2001). "Supervisa alcalde obras en colonias y comunidades". *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 5th July.

hegemonic party system. Either through the paying of complementary fees, the provision of problem-solving information more adequate for specific needs, or the giving of unpaid labour hours, neighbours have augmented their presence in the processes of introduction of urban infrastructure services.

NC networks in this specific policy area have become looser than in the past, when decisions were a matter of closed policy communities formed of officials from government, the PRI, unions, and other PRI co-opted organisations. As a result, although still in a very limited way, the three municipalities have experienced dynamisms of what an interviewee called a “political culture of co-responsibility”<sup>124</sup>. Having said this, it is important to note that the introduction of NC networks in the mentioned policy processes has been done without a significant displacement of the *loci* of power, which, although modified, are still within the mayor’s sphere of influence. This is the result of the explicit policy of municipal officials of Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas to avoid extremely self-organised and fragmented decision processes, which could seriously impair their ability to govern.

Overall, NCs and CPWs have a relatively small influence in municipal policy. The substantial work in public services is not carried out through them, and the income provided by them, in monetary resources or unpaid labour hours, has been traditionally small. Nevertheless, NCs are important because they show a significant paradigm change in the way policy-making had been traditionally done in Mexican municipalities. As Guillén-López (1999a) argues about Tijuana in the mid 1990s, the introduction of NCs implies a new model of government that presupposes a

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<sup>124</sup> Dujowich, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.



proactive, participant society and a municipality that designs policy as a reaction to societal activity. This paradigm shift, which has been verified by the establishment and maintenance of networks in the urban infrastructure policy areas, requires a new conceptualisation of government-society interactions.

### *Citizens' Councils*

In addition to NCs and CPWs, the three studied municipalities have introduced Citizens' Councils (CCs) as a strategy to complement the informal (and micro) policy-making and implementation (carried out by the committees) with a municipality-wide planning that takes into consideration the technical and financial capabilities of the corresponding local government. CCs can be either 'advisory' (*consultivo*) if all their members are appointed by the mayor, or 'for development' (*de Desarrollo*) if at least some of them are elected. As it can be seen in table 14, León has established five CCs (Annual State Fair, Population, Prevention of Drug Addictions, Prevention of Children's Abuse, and Planning). The latter, the Planning Council for Municipal Development (COPLADEM) is the most important among León's CCs. Similar bodies with a slightly different name (CODEMUN) have also been implemented in Orizaba and Zacatecas. CODEMUNs in these two municipalities are the only CCs that deal with most policy areas of local government. The COPLADEM and CODEMUNs are formed of three types of actors: politicians (the mayor and aldermen), municipal staff (department directors and their technical personnel), and citizens elected among NCs members or appointed by the mayor. Their representation quotas vary but citizens are the majority in the three case studies. Unlike NCs and CPWs, which exhibit dynamisms of policy networks, these

Councils for Municipal Development are closed policy communities that are especially relevant for establishing general expense priorities in the yearly budgets. In general, the systems that produce the Councils for Municipal Development vary in their degree of complexity, being León the most intricate one.

The COPLADEM of León was originally an appointed CC, but in 1997 it became an elected one<sup>125</sup>. This CC is composed of several Work Commissions and a Technical Commission. There are eight Work Commissions in the COPLADEM: a) Economic Development, b) Public Health, c) Education, d) Sports and Culture, e) Public Services and Basic Infrastructure, f) Law and Justice, g) Ecology and Environment, and h) Public Transport and Safety. Work Commissions are established using the NC system. The 450 NCs of the municipality are distributed in 27 territorial sectors<sup>126</sup>. Each NC sends a delegate to the territorial sector meetings, which are organised according to the Work Commissions' policy areas. In these meetings a territorial sector representative is elected. Sector representatives, in addition to the corresponding policy area's alderman and the relevant departmental directors, establish a Work Commission; these function independently, holding monthly meetings to prepare annual diagnostics on the policy area in their charge and to evaluate and propose municipal programmes (COPLADEM, 2000).

The COPLADEM Technical Commission, on the other hand, is composed of 27 representatives of the territorial sectors (elected by NC delegates), the eight coordinators of the Work Commissions (also citizens), one representative of the CPWs,

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<sup>125</sup> Guerrero, H. Personal interview. León. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>126</sup> Ramírez, A. Personal interview. León. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002.



the mayor, the directors of the Planning Institute (IMPLAN), the DSD, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Potable Water (SAPAL), the aldermen in charge of the policy areas to be discussed in specific meetings, and officials from the state government invited on an *ad hoc* basis (COPLADEM, 2000). There are in total 36 citizens elected to the Technical Commission and a varying number of politicians and administrative staff (normally around 12). Citizens have voice and vote rights, while politicians and administrative staff can address the council, but are not entitled to vote. Citizens and the Work Commissions' coordinators are elected for a minimum of a year and can be re-elected for a maximum of three (cf. Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999b). The COPLADEM Technical Commission has as its main functions the approval of the MDP, the design of the overall priority criteria for public services' works, and the resolution of the conflicts between formal planning (led by the IMPLAN) and the informal planning (produced in the NCs) (COPLADEM, 2000).

Since 2001, the COPLADEM Technical Commission has had limited budgetary capabilities. Once the City Council has approved the annual expenditure budget, including the total sum to be spent in public services, the COPLADEM decides on the priority of public works for the city, regardless of whether they are funded by FAIS, other federal transfers, municipal money, or public-private schemes<sup>127</sup>. Its decisions shape the AOP, which is the short-term expenditure strategy of the municipality. Because COPLADEM Technical Commission's decisions are not legally binding, the City Council can veto any plan that does not have the support of aldermen. In practice, however, its decisions have been followed because politicians

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<sup>127</sup> Guerrero, H. Personal interview. León. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

participate also in the discussions preceding voting, influencing in this way the elected citizens' choice. In addition, because discussions are not centred on the total sums to be spent but rather on the priorities for spending, consensus has proved less difficult to achieve than previously thought<sup>128</sup>. It seems that the criteria for the selection of priorities of elected citizens and government officials are not too different; both kinds of actors tend to favour policy decisions that have an effect on the greatest possible number of neighbours<sup>129</sup>.

The CODEMUN in Orizaba, differently from the COPLADEM in León, has its members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council. In practical terms many of them are NC presidents, although the presidents of the chambers of commerce and industry, and the principal businessmen of the city are also usually invited. They are normally appointed for three years although in the 2001–2004 administration they served for four. The CODEMUN includes these appointed citizens (in this case 20), the mayor, the directors of the DSD and the Department of Public Works and Urban Management, and the aldermen concerned with the topics to be discussed. As in León, all attending members (normally 27) have voice rights, but only the 20 appointed citizens can vote<sup>130</sup>. Like in León, CODEMUN's decisions are reached after discussions in which the key municipal officials participate, shaping them in an important way<sup>131</sup>. Being an appointed, advisory body to the mayor, CODEMUN's decisions are limited to propose improvements in public services and prioritise public works, and their decisions are not binding for the City Council.

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<sup>128</sup> Ramírez, A. Personal interview. León. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>129</sup> Briseño, F. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>130</sup> Espinoza de los Monteros, I. Personal interview. Orizaba. 20<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.



Nevertheless, the resulting prioritisation of public works is publicised and sent to the state congress in order to meet the LFC requirements on citizens' consultation<sup>132</sup>.

In Zacatecas, on the other hand, NCs officials elect their representatives to the CODEMUN. As in León, NCs are grouped in territorial sectors (22) and each one elects its delegate to this planning council. In addition to these representatives, the mayor, the director of the DSD, some technical advisors, and aldermen (on a rotational basis) also participate in this planning council<sup>133</sup>. All CODEMUN's members have voice rights (22 citizens and 12 municipal officials usually in attendance), but unlike what happens in León and Orizaba, the mayor (in addition to the citizens) has voting rights<sup>134</sup>.

The CODEMUN of Zacatecas has similar capacities to León's COPLADEM. Its main tasks are to approve the MDP, to decide priorities on the city's public works, and to resolve, in main expense categories, how branch 33 income is going to be used. Once the City Council is notified about the amount of transfers it will receive in the year, the CODEMUN makes the expenses' budget for street paving, public lighting, sewers and other neighbourhood improvements. The CODEMUN also performs the role of advisory council to the mayor in health, sanitation, and education policies<sup>135</sup>. The priorities decided by the CODEMUN are sent directly to the Department of Public Works, although the City Council retains the power to approve each one of them separately<sup>136</sup>, with an important exception. In the last year

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<sup>132</sup> Espinoza de los Monteros, I. Personal interview. Orizaba. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

<sup>133</sup> Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003.

<sup>134</sup> Juárez – Alfaro, M. del C. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

of the studied administration it was decided that CODEMUN priorities should be binding to the City Council only in public works funded by branch 33<sup>137</sup>. This CC has been the only one among the case studies to have the prerogative to compel aldermen to accept its priorities, albeit only during 2001, and in a very specific policy area.

### CCs and policy-making

Assessing the impact of CCs is difficult because the City Council retains (in the three cases) the prerogative of modifying policy priorities set by them when the specific public works are discussed in the *Cabildo* (exception made to branch 33 public works in Zacatecas during 2001). Nevertheless, City Councils tend to follow priorities defined in the COPLADEM and CODEMUNs given the gains in legitimacy that doing so entails and the important capacity of local officials to shape CCs decisions. It is important to note that is difficult to trace a causal link between choices taken in the CCs and the actual public works made during the year. The main obstacle to do this is the lack of access to information, for although CCs decisions are advertised, municipal records on COPLADEM and CODEMUNs reunions are not usually available, and their meetings are held behind closed doors. This does not facilitate determining the actual levels of influence over policy of representative citizens.

At the same time, blurredness levels within the COPLADEM and CODEMUNs appear to be especially high, not only because their collegiate decisions are known but the voting records and positions of their members are not, but also because (in

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<sup>137</sup> Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003.



practical terms) the opinions of representative citizens and municipal officials tend to converge<sup>138</sup>. This is plausible, given that CCs representative citizens normally have a background of collaboration with municipal officials<sup>139</sup> and, therefore, can be co-opted by authorities to support local policies more easily than regular citizens. Additionally, the influence of local officials in the discussions of CCs is critical, for the prestige of the technical expertise of departmental directors and aldermen is added to their already high political status, making their opinions especially influential over member citizens. It is symptomatic that during the three-year periods of the studied administrations, there are not dissenting statements in the local press of CCs members about their collegiate decisions.

León's COPLADEM is the most important planning body in this municipality's multilayered system of participation. The micro-planning is carried out by the NCs and CPW's mentioned above, and its main focus is local problem-solving. The IMPLAN, on the other hand, conducts strategic planning using technical criteria, while the COPLADEM focuses on the general priorities of citizens and local officials (cf. Cabrero-Mendoza, 1996; and Santos-Zavala, 1999). In practice, it is the COPLADEM that has the highest influence over macro policy-making<sup>140</sup>. This is important, for according to official reports, 61 per cent of all public works on basic infrastructure, 14 per cent of all economic development actions, and 25 per cent of all social development programmes in 2000 were carried out as a direct result of the policy priorities established in this CC (COPLADEM, 2000). During most of the administration of Mr. Ayala-Torres, the COPLADEM has decided on the entirety of

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<sup>138</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Guerrero, H. Personal interview. León. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

León's public works, which have the highest proportion of municipal expenses among the three case studies. In 2001, they represented 35.46 per cent of the total municipal expenses, while in 2002 they were 32.60 per cent (see table 18).

The presence of the COPLADEM in León's policy-making is evident especially in the most important projects of the administration, like the above-mentioned SIT<sup>141</sup>, against which there were protests led by NCs members<sup>142</sup>; the general policies to hold back corruption in public markets (against the irregular assignment of available places to new vendors)<sup>143</sup>, the cost of public transport tickets (they were not raised as the mayor had intended),<sup>144</sup> and the general policies on training courses for municipal employees and the public<sup>145</sup>.

In the case of Orizaba, the CODEMUN has never had any capacity to decide on the municipal budget, even though it can set the general service priorities for the city. In terms of the 'power dependence' that it creates within the municipal bureaucracy, this CC influence is quite limited, given that their members are appointed and that the City Council holds the last word on its proposals. In addition, the expense in public works between 1998 and 2002 was rather irregular, especially during the last PANista administration. In 2001, the first year of the studied administration, the City Council decided to approve expenses in public services that reached 16.70 per cent

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<sup>141</sup> Guevara, S. (2002). "Va para largo tren interurbano". *El Sol de León* 17<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>142</sup> Meléndez, F. (2003). "Interrumpe ciudadano a autoridades durante sesión de información SIT". *El Heraldo de León*, 18<sup>th</sup> September.

<sup>143</sup> Alvarado, A. (2002). "Persiste corrupción en los mercados: ARZ". *El Sol de León*, 26<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>144</sup> Pliego, J. (2003). "Congela alcalde negociación sobre aumento tarifario". *El Heraldo de León*, 14<sup>th</sup> September.

<sup>145</sup> Velázquez, L. (2003). "Capacita a 30 mil personas con 6 mdp". *El Heraldo de León*, 19<sup>th</sup> September



of the total spending of that year. According to a municipal official, 79 per cent of the CODEMUN proposals were accepted that year and incorporated into the AOP<sup>146</sup>. However, even if a similar rate of accepted proposals was kept in 2002, the overall percentage of public works' expenses diminished to 5.69 (see table 18).

**Table 18. Public works, social services, and aids in the case studies as percentages of their gross expenditure, 1998 - 2002**

Municipality	Year	Gross expenditure	Public works and social services	Subsidies, transfers, and aids
León	1998	100.00	25.05	1.84
	1999	100.00	35.52	6.24
	2000	100.00	40.99	6.65
	2001	100.00	35.46	8.95
	2002	100.00	32.60	9.20
Orizaba	1998	100.00	10.95	3.16
	1999	100.00	2.19	1.45
	2000	100.00	5.16	4.23
	2001	100.00	16.70	5.08
	2002	100.00	5.69	0.00
Zacatecas	1998	100.00	8.47	0.00
	1999	100.00	12.42	0.86
	2000	100.00	11.73	26.83
	2001	100.00	18.15	1.70
	2002	100.00	17.83	2.49

Source: own elaboration on data from INEGI (2005).

Official figures for the expense rate in works prioritised by the CODEMUN during the second half of the administration have been not produced, but information of local newspapers suggests that it diminished from the 40 million pesos spent during 2001 and the first half of 2002<sup>147</sup>. This indicates that the influence of CODEMUN decisions on overall municipal policy declined as the administration reached its end.

<sup>146</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

<sup>147</sup> Orizaba en Red (2003). "Entregan autoridades infraestructura educativa por más de 1 millón de pesos". *Orizaba en Red*, 27<sup>th</sup> October; Orizaba en Red (2003). "Entregó ayer alcalde

Finally, the CODEMUN of Zacatecas had an important role in establishing priority public works<sup>148</sup>, which reached 12.42 and 11.73 per cent of total expenditure in 1999 and 2000, respectively. In 2001, the first year in which this CC began to issue compulsory decisions, public works' expense reached 18.15 per cent (see table 18). Exact statistics on the number of submitted proposals accepted by the City Council during the first two years of the administration do not exist, but an informant suggests that at least half of them were incorporated into the corresponding AOPs<sup>149</sup>. The really significant percentage is the one of 2001, for the CODEMUN decided on almost the totality of the mentioned 18.15 per cent of expenditure, given that for that year branch 33 income represented 25.91 per cent of the municipality's total revenue (see table 17) and that the total income and expenditure amounts of Zacatecas were the same (INEGI, 2005). In any case, local newspapers barely register the decisions of the CODEMUN, which makes this CC the most closed policy community of the three cases.

This last issue raises the problem of accountability. In general terms, the COPLADEM and CODEMUNs influence is present in local policy-making, but it is extremely difficult to determine its precise extent. Unlike NCs and CPWs, which operate under the supervision of the DSD (or DCP) and the local congresses, CCs

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orizabeño mobiliario a cuatro escuelas de la ciudad". *Orizaba en Red*, 17th December; Orizaba en Red (2003). "Inauguran autoridades paquete de obras por 2 millones 398 mil pesos". *Orizaba en Red*, 19th December; Orizaba en Red (2004). "Inauguran autoridades obras por 3.5 mdp en beneficio de 12 mil ciudadanos". *Orizaba en Red*, 1st October; Orizaba en Red (2004). "Entregan autoridades el último paquete de obras a los ciudadanos". *Orizaba en Red*, 14th December.

<sup>148</sup> El Sol de Zacatecas (1999). "Rindió su primer informe de labores Ana Laura Pascal de Nahle". *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 12th November.

<sup>149</sup> Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14th February 2003.



operation is closed to the scrutiny of other governmental agencies. It is true that their decisions are communicated to the local congresses in the cases of Orizaba and Zacatecas in order to comply with the requirements of the LFC; but because these CCs do not handle citizens' contributions (in combination with federal transfers and local income) their role is considered mostly consultative, and therefore, they are left to the corresponding municipality's supervision. This sometimes causes CCs to be considered by the public as the mayor's private groups of advisers, which is strengthened when they are composed of appointed-only members.

As Cole and John (2001) argue, accountability is compromised when local policy decisions are reached after elaborate negotiations between public bodies and citizens' representatives that are not made public. The problem lies in the possibility, pointed out by Blair (2000), that these closed policy communities are more interested in benefiting their own groups rather than the entire city. Local governance studies in Mexico have hardly touched the subject, given that the main concern during the 1990s was how to open up participation spaces for citizens. Now that citizens are a component of complex participatory systems, the issue has begun to be treated in the literature. Cabrero-Mendoza (2004a), for example, argues that citizens' participation in local policy-making is more important now than it was in the early 1990s, but that accountability has not improved, because these participatory systems have produced policy communities that can be as closed as they were in the times of the hegemonic party system, but with selected citizens instead of the traditional politicians. This matter has to be addressed properly in a specific research, as it was mentioned above. Here suffices to say that, in spite of the lack of measures to ensure the accountability of CCs members to other governmental agencies, the case studies display a varying

degree of openness to external scrutiny that is determined by the willingness of the corresponding mayor to publicise the link between CCs decisions and completed public works. This confirms the centrality of the role of the mayor but, at the same time, increases the probability of improving in accountability if this is an issue proposed by competing political parties in elections. As the case of Orizaba illustrates, a change in the policy approach to participation mechanisms can rapidly modify the patterns of interaction among policy networks and communities.

## Conclusions

In the first part of the chapter, blurredness was defined as the indistinctness between the traditional roles of governmental and non-governmental actors that results from the introduction of citizens' networks in processes of policy-making and implementation. The three case studies display a significant, although uneven, degree of involvement of citizens' networks in the definition of basic urban services' policy and its implementation. Unlike the traditional approach of local governments while the hegemonic party system was in operation, the approach found in the studied administrations is more open to non-governmental actors and citizens that do not come from the traditional pro-PRI organisations that shaped policy in the past. NCs, CPWs, and CCs have been introduced in León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas as a means to comply with the LFC guidelines and to make direct beneficiaries of services participate in their prioritisation and implementation.

These policy networks and communities, however, have also been introduced and maintained in the case studies as a strategy to increase their legitimacy levels and



obtain resources to complete public works, conforming, in this way, to the main purposes of networks identified by the analysed authors, such as Benington (2001), Gulati and Gargiulo (1999), Hanf and O'Toole (1992), Jordan and Schubert (1992), and King (2003), among others. In this sense, the three cases have experienced a certain shift from government to governance, for their policy-making processes rely more on citizens' networks than in the past, and they are the result of regular exchanges with policy communities, according to the above-mentioned understandings of governance of John (2001), and Cole and John (2001).

The introduction of citizens' networks, however, has not been verified in all policy sectors or in the same degree. As Desai and Imrie (1998: 664) have pointed out, local governments implementing governance mechanisms tend to "circumscribe participation to non-strategic spheres of operation", and in the three cases (with the exception of Zacatecas during a short period) the City Councils retained the powers to establish the initial amounts with which CCs elaborate budgets of public services, and to veto particular public works resulting from the services' priorities defined by the CCs. Nevertheless, there has been a significant involvement of citizens in NCs and CPWs, which has been instrumental in the improvement of potable water, electricity, and sewers provision. In general, policy networks and communities have become more relevant for local policy in the relatively narrow sector of basic urban services, either in the micro problem-solving of specific neighbourhoods with undersupplied services, or the macro prioritisation of public works for the city.

Policy networks and communities in the selected municipalities do not function in the same way, and there are three factors that appear to be especially important to shape their interactions.

The first one is the policy sector itself. As Bevir et al., (2003: 10) argue, the shift from government to governance in Europe has taken the form of governments giving a “reduced and shared role in problem solving” to citizens. In the three cases, this role has been given to inhabitants of neighbourhoods with problems in the quality or supply of basic services. The participation of citizens, however, is not apparent in other important policy sectors, such as local economic development, the regulation of commerce, sanitation, public safety, or even internal administrative services such as the office of the Municipal Comptroller, or the Municipal Treasurer. In this sense, León has a greater number of policy sectors open to citizens’ participation, because this municipality has established CCs on subjects such as population and the prevention of addictions, as it was mentioned above. The three municipalities’ most important CCs, however, are the COPLADEM and CODEMUNs analysed here. The second important factor in shaping governance interactions is how loose the involved policy networks are. As the three cases show, the different dynamisms present in NCs and CPWs, on the one hand, and CCs on the other, can be partly explained by how open they are to accept new members. In general, the three cases display a high level of initial openness when dealing with NCs and CPWs, which is related to a common approach to micro-problem solving. As the participatory bodies rise in the system, they become more closed policy communities, as the cases of the COPLADEM and CODEMUNs confirm.



Finally, the procedures for the functioning of NCs, CPWs, and CCs established by the corresponding City Council are the most important factors to shape governance patterns. León has established the most complex participatory system of the three cases, in part, because it is the municipality with greater needs of basic urbanisation services. León's participation system is very open at the bottom, requiring citizens to get involved, with demanding regularity, in the activities organised by the DSD and to pay their share in the cost of the introduction of basic services. Orizaba, on the other hand, does not use primarily its NCs and CPWs as source of financial resources, but as a means to exchange problem-solving information. Finally, Zacatecas relies on unpaid labour from citizens, showing a more traditional approach to networks but using, at the same time, the social capital built during the PRONASOL years. These different governance styles show diverse priorities in the respective political discourse of the parties in office as well as the particular needs of the municipality.

After recognising different degrees of citizens' involvement in planning and policy implementation, the really important point is to find out to what extent this formal policy-making through networks includes the positions of citizens, not participating in NCs, CPWs, and CCs. The following chapter deals with some aspects of this issue, analysing the commerce and industry chambers of these municipalities which, normally, represent the most influential economic interests in the cities.

## Chapter Five

### Self-organisation and local governance

#### Introduction

As it was established in chapter one, the analysed theoretical frameworks propose a commonality of characteristics present in the different forms of governance. Governance, defined as a paradigm of policy-making “based on loose networks of individuals” (John, 2001: 9), generates patterns of government-society interactions that are more fragmented, blurred, and self-organised than the ones produced by traditional governmental policy-making. Recent contributions to the literature on sub-national and national governance have emphasised the importance of local and national contexts as shaping factors of governance patterns. As a result, chapter two has considered the general traits of the Mexican national context, laying stress on the conditions that have enabled sub-national governments to incorporate non-governmental actors into processes of policy-making and implementation, using a variety of participatory mechanisms. Chapter three and four have analysed the case studies, focusing on these municipalities’ processes of fragmentation (through the proliferation of governmental agencies and the specialisation of their dealings with the general public), and the blurredness between the public and private spheres emerging from the participation of NCs, CPWs, and Citizens’ Councils in policy-making.

The general picture of the three case studies is one where the shift from government to the incorporation of networks in policy-making has been partial and uneven, being



introduced in policy areas that have a high legitimising potential (such as basic urbanisation services), and over which local officials have maintained a high level of influence, even if they lack the total control of the policy-making process. Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas display diverse patterns of governance that are shaped by the stance of the corresponding party in office over the particular issues considered, the policy networks' sector, the looseness of these networks, and the procedures established for their operation by the relevant local officials.

This chapter deals with self-organisation in the case studies, being this the third attribute of governance presupposed in the abovementioned theoretical frameworks. Self-organisation describes a state in which societal actors are autonomous and more self-governed and, therefore, less disposed to be steered by government (Rhodes, 1997). The greater self-organisation, typical of governance, challenges traditional policy-making because it demands from government superior capabilities of adaptation, flexibility, and negotiation (Kooiman, 1993). As a consequence, initial governance understandings (e.g. Rhodes, 1995) interpreted self-organisation as an obstacle to governmental steering, and therefore, as a condition that could generate incapacity to gain citizens' acceptance of policy or as a factor that could originate failure to get concerted policies among governmental and non-governmental actors. More recent contributions to the literature on sub-national governance, however, have argued that if indeed self-organisation in governance interactions does not automatically ensure convergence and collaboration, it does produce a greater interdependence among public and private actors, which can in its turn generate strong dynamisms of collaboration (Cole and John, 2001).

In the same way, this chapter argues that the three case studies display important patterns of interdependence between local governments and the local business sector, in spite that the latter is considerably self-organised. This is especially evident in the interactions between municipal governments and the commercial and industrial chambers. These chambers are among the most influential actors that shape local policy, and the three cases show evidence of a considerable level of collaboration with City Councils, through the implementation of concerted policies. Scarcity of resources facilitates this collaboration; an aspect of governance that is endorsed by the Mexican political culture, which encourages exchanges between politics and the business sector. By comparison, other NGOs have a less significant weight in local policy-making. These patterns of interaction, however, are not the same in the three municipalities: they are shaped by the particular issues in consideration and the general political stance of the corresponding party in office.

In order to develop this argument, the chapter briefly considers self-organisation according to the analysed governance understandings, following with the analysis of some social organisations and its comparison with local commerce and industrial chambers. Finally, the conclusion elaborates on some of the factors that are relevant to explain the different approaches to governance found in the three case studies.

### **Governance and self-organisation**

The analysed governance understandings, according to their different approaches and theoretical backgrounds, argue that self-organisation among non-governmental



actors is greater in the interaction patterns of governance than in the governmental ones.

Basically, self-organisation can be defined as self-government and autonomy from the state (Rhodes, 1997). Self-organisation plays an important role in governance given that, in conditions of increased social-political complexity, governments have experienced a reduction in their capacities to exert control over societal actors. As Kickert (1993) argues, the governmental capacities to effectively control and organise, especially non-governmental actors, has decreased as the result of insufficient levels of acceptance of policy, increased societal fragmentation, and the complications resulting from more intricate policy-making processes. In these conditions

government does not have enough power to exert its will in other actors. Other social institutions are, to a great extent, autonomous. They are not controlled by any single superordinated actor, not even the government. They largely control themselves [...] Deregulation, government withdrawal and steering at a distance [...] are all notions of less direct government regulation and control, which lead to more autonomy and self-governance for social institutions (Ibid.: 275).

Self-organisation is an attribute that is present among social-political actors to the extent that they, either competing or collaborating with the state, play a part in the overall organization of society (Kooiman, 1993a). Self-organisation is an attribute that “contributes to the governability of modern societies” because “many sectors in

present-day societies largely govern themselves” (Kooiman, 2002: 15), as it is becoming increasingly apparent when the state retreats from some policy sectors or intervenes in them using unconventional means, redefining its traditional role. From the governmental perspective, self-organisation is more noticeable in the sectors where networks are incorporated into the policy-making process, especially when they are inter-organizational and operate in a highly fragmented environment (Rhodes, 1997). Self-organisation among non-governmental actors produces polycentrism, for the networks of autonomous actors can accumulate a considerable amount of resources of many kinds, which can put them in a position to compete with the state (Jessop, 1998).

Self-organisation also plays an important role in the non-hierarchical arrangements of networks that emerge in fragmented polities. Once the traditional government-society interaction patterns (or systems of interest aggregation) divide, dispersed actors rearrange around new, many times non-governmental, loci of power (Rosenau, 1997). The resulting power dispersal hinders the government’s steering capabilities because non-governmental autonomous actors introduce dynamisms of interaction that are not hierarchical, evolving along “paths marked by reversals, sideward movements, feedback loops, and a variety of non-linear dynamics that make it difficult to both practice and trace the exercise of governance” (Rosenau, 2000: 177).

Early governance understandings consider that self-organisation, although not necessarily incompatible with public interests, obstructs traditional governmental interventions. Rhodes (1995), for example, presupposes that self-organisation is a quality that belongs primarily to the non-governmental sector. Consequently, self-



organised actors promote private interests (Rhodes, 2000) to the point that they can challenge the state's prerogatives if they become powerful (Rhodes, 1997). If self-organisation increases, then governability can only be sustained using a higher amount of governmental resources and introducing new forms of interaction with society (Mayntz, 1993). Especially at international level, governance is the realm of the governmental absence, where political consensus or negotiation is the result of the convergent choices of autonomous actors that cannot be compelled to act according to a single actor's determination (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992).

Nevertheless, more recent contributions to the literature on national and sub-national governance have pointed out that, in spite of the general increase of self-organisation among non-governmental individual actors and inter-organizational policy networks, the "total sum of the state capabilities [remains] largely unchanged" (Pierre and Peters, 2000: 92-93) and, therefore, the state continues to be the most influential actor over societal affairs, albeit sometimes in manners and policy sectors that were unusual some decades ago. Accordingly, self-organisation is not automatically considered as opposite to governmental activity as a whole, but rather, as a condition incompatible with the traditional authoritative means to exert control and ensure accountability to the state (*ibid.*). Moreover, Peters (2000) argues that regardless of the increased fragmentation and autonomy of some social-political actors (including inter-organizational networks), the actual degree of acceptance or opposition to public policy varies according to particular contexts. The introduction of networks into policy-making can generate, or make it more difficult to attain, shared policies among governmental and non-governmental actors (Cole and John,

2001). What is common in these conflicting interaction patterns of governance is that they are the expression of shared relations of dependence among social-political actors, which have increased with time. Given the differences among the governance patterns in western industrialised countries, Cole and John (2001) reach the conclusion that governance

does not mean convergence, [rather] is about greater interdependence between public and private sectors (Ibid.: 142-143).

The following sections of the chapter deal with the particular forms that this public-private interdependence takes in the three case studies, analysing the relations between the most important non-governmental actors and the respective local governments.

### **Non-governmental actors in the three case studies**

In general, the two most relevant non-governmental actors in Mexican urban municipalities are social NGOs (i.e. non-profit citizens' associations which can be officially registered as such in order to receive deductible donations), and the local chambers of commerce and industry<sup>150</sup>. However, the influence over local policy of social NGOs (also called *Asociaciones Civiles* or “civic associations”) is normally less significant than the one exerted by the commercial and industrial chambers; and when it arises, it has the tendency to be limited to the specific policy sectors in which these NGOs work, while the chambers' influence tends to be more wide-ranging.

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<sup>150</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



There are several factors that play a role in the social NGOs inferior capacity to shape local policy in a considerable and sustained way. Among these, the fact that the Mexican political system has not modified its basic structure, which was designed to secure the pre-eminence of a hegemonic party, is especially important. In these circumstances, it is difficult to shape policy unless the social movement or NGO can influence several actors in different levels of government at the same time, or it is co-opted into the policy-making process. Having an effect on hierarchical actors other than the mayor exerts more pressure over him/her, functioning as an incentive to resolve in favour of the involved social organization<sup>151</sup>. Co-optation increases the probability of a favourable treatment by government, given the resource exchange that is usual in clientelistic arrangements, and the reduced number of requests coming from an authorised social representative (as opposed to all social groups).

In the three case studies few social organizations are able or willing to perform in this way, and as it was mentioned above, local governments try to circumvent autonomous social representatives by the introduction of direct interactions with citizens. As a result, local governments lack the disposition to constantly consult NGOs, or to invite them to policy implementation. In addition, social participation is usually defined in very narrow terms by municipalities, considering it as involvement in the participatory mechanisms described in the previous chapters. This discourages the commitment of constituted NGOs that are not willing to accommodate to the established procedures (Espinoza-Valle, 2000).

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

The business sector, on the other hand, usually has a greater and faster impact over matters of public services and urban landscape, not only because an operative urban infrastructure is a requirement for the establishment of commerce and industry, but also because established networks between businessmen and municipal officials tend to be more stable and less conflictive than the ones developed in NCs or citizens' councils. Thus, the prevailing impression among the most important social-political actors in the three studied municipalities is that commercial and industrial chambers are influential in local policy-making, in spite that their presidents do not normally hold City Council seats while they are in office.

The influence of commercial and industrial chambers is related to the economic importance of their members. Until the late 1990s, affiliation to the local industrial or commercial chamber was a federal requirement<sup>152</sup>, which ensured that governments had a reduced number of interlocutors when dealing with the private sector. Despite the fact that it is no longer compulsory to belong to the chambers, they have maintained their sectoral representative character, for there are not relevant alternative associations to these. As a result, the Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce, Services and Tourism (CONCANACO-SERVYTUR) represents a substantial segment of the employed population of the Country.

In the case of León, the local branch of the CONCANACO-SERVYTUR, the National Chamber of Commerce and Services of León (CANACO) groups together the medium and large commercial businesses in the municipality, which belong to a sector that overall represents 20.53 per cent of León's jobs. In Orizaba, the local

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<sup>152</sup> Kuri – Rosado, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2001.



National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Tourism (CANACO-SERVYTUR) represents almost the totality of the companies and independent professionals involved in commerce, restaurants, and hotels (29.16 per cent of the entire employed population of the city). In Zacatecas, the National Chamber of Commerce (CANAZAC) is composed of the great majority of the businesses in the same economic activities, which are 28.87 per cent of the labour force (see table 19). CANAZAC is especially relevant because, in practical terms, it plays the role of a state commerce chamber. Most businesses of the important cities of the state traditionally affiliate to it, regardless of the local commerce chambers in their respective municipalities<sup>153</sup>.

**Table 19. Employed population\* in the three studied municipalities by main economic activity (percentages in 2000)**

Economic activity	León	Orizaba	Zacatecas
Agriculture, activities related to livestock, and fishing.	1.66	1.17	2.58
Mining	0.06	0.22	0.76
Manufacturing industry	39.18	18.49	11.25
Activities related to energy production and water bodies	0.22	0.57	0.62
Construction	6.30	7.46	9.44
Commerce	20.53	22.31	19.77
Transportation and communications	4.08	5.04	5.28
Finance services	1.08	0.70	0.99
Government	2.04	3.61	9.94
Entertainment and culture	0.81	0.81	1.35
Personal professional services	1.96	2.78	2.39
Real state	0.50	0.44	0.41
Activities related to restaurants and hotels	4.37	6.85	6.10
Other activities (excluding government)	8.72	12.09	9.22
Activities related to technical and other kinds of support to the business sector	1.73	1.30	1.36
Education services	3.94	9.25	11.61
Health and Social assistance	2.82	6.91	6.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: own calculations on data in INAFED 2003a. Note: \* “Employed population” stands for “Población Económicamente Activa (PEA) Ocupada”. As it is known, the INEGI considers in this category both employees and self-employed professionals.

<sup>153</sup>Dávila del Real, E. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

Regarding manufacturing industries, the three studied municipalities have branches of the National Chamber of the Industry of Transformation (CANACINTRA), which also represent most of the companies involved in that economic activity. León, being the most important centre for leather-related businesses in the country, has a high percentage of labour force committed to manufacturing (39.18 per cent). Orizaba and León have 18.49 and 11.25 per cent respectively (see table 19). CANACINTRA has traditionally played an important role in securing municipal contracts for public works, which gives this chamber a position of influence in local committees of acquisitions, mentioned below, and in advising citizens' councils. CANACINTRA is the most important collective actor of the secondary economic sector, just as chambers of commerce are in the tertiary one. The presidents of these associations are seen as spokespersons of their respective economic sectors, which combined encompass almost all the cities' economic activity (see table 20).

**Table 20. Employed population in the three studied municipalities by economic sector (percentages in 2000)**

<b>Economic sector</b>	<b>León</b>	<b>Orizaba</b>	<b>Zacatecas</b>
Primary	1.72	1.39	3.34
Secondary	45.70	26.52	21.31
Tertiary	52.58	72.09	75.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: data in table 19 and economic activity classification in INAFED 2000a.

The pre-eminence of CANACO and CANACINTRA facilitates dealings with the municipalities. It also explains the consideration traditionally given to their presidents by mayors, and the relative ease with which government and chambers design joint policies. Strong business-government relationships are also endorsed by a political culture that considers academic or business-related backgrounds as an additional



advantage, given that there is not a formal civil service (Cabrero-Mendoza, 2003). Most mayors are inexperienced in government matters, for the mayoralty is often considered as the first step in their political careers. Having a successful academic or business occupation is seen as a way to acquire the necessary skills to hold office, as it was mentioned in chapter three. This has produced a trend among municipal branches of political parties, which seek to attract businessmen and academics into partisan militancy and select them as candidates for City Council seats (Ziccardi, 1995).

This trend is also explained by the discredit of traditional politicians in local politics. As Camp (1996) points out, the usual sources for government officials were the National University, in the case of the federal administration, and the workers' and teachers' unions, the army, and the partisan structures in the case of local governments. The dissatisfaction of the electorate with traditional politicians has introduced the informal requirement of a previous non-political career (cf. Hernández–Vicencio, 2000). Interviewees argue that this ensures that the new mayor will be more interested in solving the city's problems rather than in advancing his/her political career. The assumption is that a successful professional can always go back to his/her practice once the governmental period is over, securing a long-term income before entering politics. This, in addition, is expected to function as a measure against corruption. This kind of candidacies emphasises the proximity between local officials and businessmen. In this way, it is not uncommon for

industrialists and retailers to expect a favourable treatment from the mayor if he/she is a former chamber president<sup>154</sup>.

Interviewed businessmen entering electoral politics argue that the rationale of their decision is traditional politics' failure. They propose new roles for municipal officials and businessmen that require the establishment of permanent inter-sectoral networks. Businessmen going into politics assume that their connections with the private sector will help them to reach convergence over conflictive policy areas, like the regulation of informal commerce, and to attract investments<sup>155</sup>. As a whole, the commercial and industrial chambers have a significant disposition to get involved in local policy-making.

#### *Social organizations and local governments*

In the three studied municipalities, social NGOs establish official linkages with the local governments and sometimes participate in joint programmes, but their power to influence policy is relatively small and limited to the specific policy areas of their interest. Part of the explanation for this fact is the apolitical nature of most social NGOs in the country<sup>156</sup>. The oldest and most well known, like the Red Cross or Alcoholics Anonymous, have institutional relations with the municipalities and collaborate in shared programmes, typically fundraising campaigns or the prevention of addictions. The mayors of the three municipalities, for example, usually initiate the annual Red Cross Funds Appeal with a contribution of their own that is given in the

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<sup>154</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>155</sup> Dávila del Real, E. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>156</sup> Medina – Lizalde, J. L. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



City Hall and is amply publicised. However, especially after the mid 1990s (when the partisan alternation in office consolidated), these organizations avoid being associated with government in order to maintain their image of autonomy<sup>157</sup>. In that sense, their official position is not to be involved in local politics<sup>158</sup>, although they ordinarily participate in citizens' councils and in programmes within their policy specialisation. Besides these established NGOs, most social organizations are short-lived, usually operative in years of federal elections and focused on matters related to electoral platforms<sup>159</sup>. In many aspects, these ephemeral social organizations work like nodes of issue networks, assisting the interactions of the large number of actors that are involved in electoral affairs. As Hecló (1978) argues, this kind of networks can only be lightly administered given its informal and rapidly changing nature. Thus, it is more probable that concrete collaboration in policy-making emerges among the established NGOs than with the other organizations.

The citizens' participation model of León has been criticised for being, basically, closed to any substantial collaboration with NGOs that are not compliant with the DSD criteria. Bazdresch-Parada (2002) points out that here lies one of the most important weaknesses of the PANista approach to the non-governmental sector, for it tends to exclude NGOs that are not closely related to the strategic policies of the administration. Hernández-Vicencio (2000), after considering the cases of Chihuahua and Baja California, argues that this might be related to the particular orientation of the PANista administrations, which tend to display a lesser 'political sensitiveness' than other parties' governments and, as a consequence, do not normally engage in

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<sup>157</sup> Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>158</sup> Alvarado – Morales, J., Ramírez, A., and Ortíz, O. Personal interviews. Orizaba, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2001; León, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2002; and Zacatecas, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003, respectively.

<sup>159</sup> Torres, J. Personal interview. Orizaba, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

considerable exchanges with social organizations. This general impression has been confirmed for the first opposition governments of other northern municipalities of the country (Aziz-Nassif, 1996). Local newspapers in León, for example, mention a history of difficult relationships with some social NGOs, including some established to fight the “neo-liberalist model employed in some [municipal] policies”<sup>160</sup>.

In the studied administration, the most relevant social NGOs were the ones related to the treatment of persons with intellectual or physical disabilities. The official webpage of the government of Guanajuato advertises 22 NGOs in León dealing with persons with mobility, hearing, visual, and intellectual disabilities, especially children (Estado de Guanajuato, 2005). These associations have usually received free promotion of their activities and monetary donations from the municipality<sup>161</sup>, which increased between 2000 and 2002 (see table 18). However, in addition to these NGOs, there is not evidence of the establishment of substantial agreements with other associations.

In the case of Orizaba there is only a reduced number of NGOs that qualify as social. Until the late 1980s, the most important non-governmental associations were labour unions. Even now, the CROM (Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants), the CROC, and CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers) have some relevance given that their combined affiliates' number is close to 17,000<sup>162</sup>. Nonetheless, the city government, being a “New-PRI” administration, has been careful in avoiding traditional practices such as the explicit policy endorsement from

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<sup>160</sup> González, V. (2002). “Pretende autoridad frenar lucha de la JOCOCA”. *El Sol de León*, 27<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>161</sup> Muñoz – López, A. Personal interview. León. 19<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>162</sup> Cruz –Arellano, E. Personal interview, Orizaba. 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001.



the unions, and in general, these have not been very relevant in policy-making. Issues that are regarded as belonging to the 'public interest', on the other hand, have been relatively successful in obtaining the combined support of local authorities and NGOs. A recent example has been a non-governmental board of trustees [Patronato] that sought the change in the venue of Expori, the Industrial Fair of Orizaba. After some years of campaign, this association was able to influence municipal officials using ecological arguments, although the fact that some of the most prominent industrialists of the city are among its members was possibly more significant:

The clubs work independently (Rotary, Lions, etc.) But a successful experience was the board of trustees of the Poplar Grove Park [Alameda]. It was founded in the previous administration [1997–2000] and it continues to work trying to improve the park. They organised a campaign to assign another venue to Expori because the park and the Lamb Foothill had begun to deteriorate. Now the fair is organised in the Orizaba Sports' Association fields. Other NGOs, like Citizens' Option [Opción Ciudadana] did nothing. The only thing they did was criticise and try to condemn positive public works<sup>163</sup>.

The Inter-Municipal Council of Environmentalists (CIMA) has been another body capable of influencing policy, in this case the conservation of the river Orizaba. Its programmes have been implemented during at least two administrations, and it has been instrumental in keeping the river bed free of rubbish in order to avoid August's floods. Cleansing the river banks has required the use of specialised machinery,

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<sup>163</sup> Dujowich, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

which has been provided by the municipality<sup>164</sup>. Besides these two cases, there have been few occasions where sustained inter-sectoral collaboration has occurred. One of them was the civic association that was founded after the kidnapping of the son of a prominent doctor in 2000. Once his body was recovered, the association led the biggest demonstration in the city in twenty years; after that rally the association was dissolved<sup>165</sup>.

In the case of Zacatecas city, the PRD government has been able to maintain close links with social NGOs during and immediately after electoral campaigns. Alianza Cívica A.C. [Civic Alliance], (a national NGO promoting anti-corruption measures), a couple of pro-Zapatista associations (supporting the uprising in the state of Chiapas), and the teachers' union backed a former PRI politician to become PRD candidate for governor in 1998. After being elected, governor Monreal made an official policy to keep those relationships<sup>166</sup> and to establish new ones with social organizations that in the past were PRI clients<sup>167</sup>. In this way, most interviewees in Zacatecas argue that the PRD governments (in the municipality and the state) react to social requests in a faster and more comprehensive way than in the PRI times. In reality, the closer linkages between government and NGOs are mostly discursive, for they do not appear to shape policy in a greater proportion than in León or Orizaba. Take for example the rise of ticket prices in public transport in 2000. Most interviewees expected the mayor and governor to oppose the request from the private concessionaires to increase the price in more than 50 per cent. Alianza Cívica and the other mentioned associations organised a campaign against the announced

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<sup>164</sup> Cadó, Y. Personal interview. Orizaba. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Barragán – Montoya, F. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>167</sup> Medina – Lizalde, J. L. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



increase and lobbied the involved governmental agencies. In the end they were not able to influence this decision, despite that it was considered a test for the government to act in response to social petitions<sup>168</sup>. Officials recognise the relevant role that Alianza Cívica and the other associations played in the 1998 elections, when the state obtained an opposition government for the first time. However, they criticise the lack of co-ordination among them and what they consider their unnecessary disapproval of legitimate policies<sup>169</sup>.

During the studied administration in Zacatecas, the local newspapers do not report on any further significant dealings between the municipality and Alianza Cívica. The Association of Street Vendors, on the other hand, played a more important role in shaping policy; its request for a greater number of permits to sell was denied in the first year of the administration, which initiated a series of negotiations conducted during an entire year in public sessions of the City Council<sup>170</sup>. The City Council granted the extension in the number of authorised street vendors, but the association protested again, asking now for permission to sell near the Cathedral<sup>171</sup>. Finally, the City Council agreed on this, in exchange for the collaboration of the street vendors in the sweeping of the streets<sup>172</sup>. In the last two years of the PRD administration, the dealings with this association decreased, although they were still present to the point of prompting a CANAZAC official protest for what this association considered an

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<sup>168</sup> Barragán – Montoya, F. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>169</sup> Navarro–Bañuelos, E. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>170</sup> Guerrero, J. C. (1999). “Comercio ambulante: un problema social”. *Momento de Zacatecas*, 14<sup>th</sup> June.

<sup>171</sup> Rocha, N. (1999). “Se rebelan tianguistas”. *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 24<sup>th</sup> November.

<sup>172</sup> El Sol de Zacatecas (1999). “Ventura Salazar y Arroyo de la Plata para el tianguis navideño”. *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 27<sup>th</sup> November.

unfair treatment of the established commerce businesses in favour of street vendors<sup>173</sup>.

In addition to the results of this research, there is evidence that suggests that the social NGOs capacity to shape local policy increases when the policy issue is considered of public interest, especially in emergencies or situations of social crisis (cf. Ziccardi, 1995). However, in ordinary situations or in cases of narrow policy issues, social NGOs influence over local policies declines. There have been some exceptions to this trend, especially when the social NGO members become local officials themselves, after entering a party that wins the elections and that is willing to adopt the NGO's aims as its official government's programme. In Texcatepec (Veracruz), for example, an association formed by the Zapatista Union of Farmers (UCZ) and the Committee of Farmers' Defence (CDC) were able to organise a successful campaign to recover lands taken illegally by private companies. In the end, the negotiations with the federal and state authorities received the full backup of the municipality officials, who were members of these associations<sup>174</sup>.

Another case in the same state is the municipality of Zaragoza, a semi-urban community where the PRD initiated some of the participatory programmes that were later implemented in Ciudad Mendoza and Zacatecas. The Committee for the People's Defence of Zaragoza (CDP) was founded in the late 1980s with the objective of improving the neighbourhoods' influence in public service policies. The difference with other approaches was the electoral focus. The leaders of the CDP

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<sup>173</sup>Dávila del Real, E. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>174</sup>Osegueda – Cruz, A. Personal interview. Xalapa. 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



became members of the PPS (later the PRD) in order to form a slate, which won in two non-consecutive occasions. The fact that the leader of the CDP was at the same time the mayor was instrumental in the implementation of programmes such as the open Cabildo and the Municipal Parliament. . These municipalities are rural and semi-urban, which suggests that the community size might be a factor in developing sustained collaboration between local governments and social NGOs.

### *Commercial and industrial chambers*

As it was already mentioned, the greater influence of chambers in policy-making (if compared to social organizations) is partly explained by the economic importance of their members. The fact that most chambers' affiliates are from the middle or upper classes gives them more influence over urban issues, especially in matters related to the use of land. Typically, CANACO and CANACINTRA members are middle-aged men, with university degrees, cars, and incomes above the average<sup>175</sup>. It is to meet the needs of these middle classes that the most expensive public works are usually done, including the changes in urban composition that the larger numbers of cars entail. This, and the abovementioned closeness between the public and business sectors characteristic of Mexican politics, has given commercial and industrial chambers a prominent place in local policy definition.

In the case of León, CANACO and the municipality have worked closely in programmes to activate the establishment of small and medium-sized businesses as a

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<sup>175</sup> Guerrero, H. Personal interview. León. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2001; Ortiz, O. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 14<sup>th</sup> February 2003; Vega – Marín, J. O. Personal interview. Mexico City. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2001, and Velasco – Pagaza, M. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

strategy to promote employment. The most publicised programme assigned grants and soft credits to starting companies, which were financed by the CANACO and the local government in equal parts<sup>176</sup>. The joint programme was considered of high priority by both the municipality and the chamber of commerce for, days before to the official presentation of the programme, the CANACO had threatened to stop paying taxes if the government's policies on commerce did not improve<sup>177</sup>. In spite of this dispute, the joint programme was continued. In addition, CANACO has agreements with the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and the Ministry of Economy to operate as an alternative assistance centre. Social Security in Mexico is funded jointly by government, the employer, who must pay an annual fee according to the number of full-time employees in his/her company, and the employees themselves through tax deductions. CANACO works as an information centre, focusing on taxes, IMSS fees, and ways to avoid fines. Moreover, its agreement with the federal government allows CANACO to be the underwriter of its members' debts: businessmen with outstanding IMSS fees are exempted from the customary deposit<sup>178</sup>.

CANACO has also implemented some programmes to help the municipality to have an updated register of street vendors, usually asking its affiliates to report them if they try to sell their merchandise in unauthorised areas<sup>179</sup>. The constant complaints of this chamber to the Directorate of Commerce have been instrumental in defining the administration's policies on street vendors, to the point of causing organised protests

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<sup>176</sup> Gómez, A. (2002). "Reactivarán pequeñas y medianas empresas con financiamiento". *El Sol de León*, 19<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>177</sup> Gómez, A. (2002). "Amenaza CANACO con dejar de pagar impuestos". *El Sol de León*, 17<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>178</sup> Rodríguez, H. Personal interview. León. 28<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.



of the vendors themselves against the municipality and CANACO<sup>180</sup>. CANACINTRA of León works in a similar way, helping the municipality with its housing programmes. Using the experience of previous collaborative schemes with INFONAVIT (the Institute of the National Fund for the Workers' Housing), this chamber has given constant advice to the Municipal Institute for Housing. In addition, CANACINTRA members with social security rights can obtain credits to buy a new or used house, build one, build an extension to an existing property, and pay debts related to these matters using CANACINTRA as underwriter of the credit or debt (CANACINTRA, 2003).

In the case of Orizaba, the mayor of the 1998–2000 administration lobbied members of CANACO–SERVYTUR in order to get land donations. The most important public work of the period was the Orizaba Avenue, a two-lane street parallel to the railroad tracks, which cross the city in its West–East axis. Owners of the adjacent properties were against the project, for the Avenue required the use of some private land. The municipality, on the other hand, could not afford to pay the land's price if it decided to take possession of the properties. In the end, the mayor asked the most important industrialists of the city, some of which had estates in the area, to donate a part of them to the municipality so the Avenue could be constructed without affecting minor private owners. The estate portions were given to the local government and, after a minor direction change, the Avenue was built<sup>181</sup>. Convergence over this point, however, was not only the result of personal networks. Some of the involved estates belong to member companies of CANACO–

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<sup>180</sup> Gómez, A. (2002). "Se quejan comerciantes por hostigamiento de inspectores". *El Sol de León*, 16<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>181</sup> Dujowich, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

SERVYTUR. This chamber's participation was instrumental in the subsequent campaign that convinced estate owners to donate small portions of them, or sell them under favourable conditions for the municipality<sup>182</sup>.

CANACO-SERVYTUR has also participated in the design of the commercial policies for the city. It is a non-spoken rule that its president has a seat in the CODEMUN, regardless of how the other voting members are elected. This chamber participates frequently in municipal programmes. In the previous administration it was in contact with the municipal Department of Commerce on a daily basis<sup>183</sup>. In the studied administration, this commercial chamber and the municipality introduced a policy of zero-tolerance of illegal street vendors. Normally, the Department of Commerce assigns concessions to particular vendors or approves ad hoc agreements with street traders' unions using different criteria. In any case, the licence for selling in pedestrian areas is geographically limited and is temporary, awarded usually for the Fairs of June or the festivities between December and January<sup>184</sup>. As a long-term strategy, the municipality has tried to relocate street vendors in controlled street markets (set up on weekends or once during weekdays) or in the conventional ones<sup>185</sup>.

The implementation of the zero-tolerance policy required the involvement of CANACO-SERVYTUR affiliates. In the first place, the municipality stopped granting licences for periods other than the mentioned ones. If vendors wanted to

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<sup>182</sup> Cadó, Y. Personal interview. Orizaba. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>183</sup> Kuri – Rosado, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2001.

<sup>184</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "Se instalará Feria del Juguete en alameda central". *Orizaba en Red*, 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

<sup>185</sup> Orizaba en Red (2002). "Alcalde llama fuertemente la Atención a tianguistas". *Orizaba en Red*, 20<sup>th</sup> November.



continue selling, they had to apply for a place at a conventional market. Subsequently, the members of the commerce chamber received details about the programme and a series of telephone numbers to which they could report irregularities. Given that the city is not divided into commercial or residential zones, there are businesses practically in all neighbourhoods. If there is a street vendor in front of an established business, the owner can report him/her to the chamber, the Department of Commerce, or the police in order to have him/her fined and removed<sup>186</sup>.

This policy protected the interests of the municipality and the chamber of commerce. On the one hand, it allowed the director of the Department of Commerce to relocate vendor supervisors [inspectores] to the city centre, leaving a small number in the zones covered by CANACO-SERVYTUR<sup>187</sup>. On the other, the chamber benefited by the decrease in competition from informal retailers, which have initial advantageous conditions because they do not pay taxes or leases. Collaboration was possible given that the municipality does not have the necessary resources to enforce local regulations on commerce, and CANACO-SERVYTUR has affiliates covering the municipality's territory.

In addition, CANACO-SERVYTUR, in similar collaborative schemes to those of León, has signed agreements with INFONAVIT and IMSS. The chamber of commerce obtained a loan from the federal housing agency in order to build 150 two and three-bedroom houses. As in the case of León, members can apply for a credit

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<sup>186</sup> Kuri – Rosado, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2001.

<sup>187</sup> Escudero – Stadelmann, A. Personal interview. Orizaba. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

directly to CANACO-SERVYTUR with increased probabilities to obtain it, given the small number of applicants. Regarding IMSS fees, the chamber's members get their fines and interests condoned if they pay before a deadline, which is negotiated at the beginning of each year<sup>188</sup>. CANACINTRA, the industrial chamber, has followed CANACO-SERVYTUR in the signing of contracts with federal and municipal agencies. Its programmes include the establishment of a fund in order to grant small loans to industries of the city. The fund is financed by CANACINTRA and the municipality in equal shares, and is part of the economy reactivation policies of the current administration<sup>189</sup>.

Finally, the chambers of Zacatecas have put into practice similar programmes to those implemented in León and Orizaba. CANAZAC has assisted the municipality in updating the street vendor records using a system like the one of Orizaba, where chamber members report any possible violation of the municipal commerce regulations<sup>190</sup>. In Zacatecas, the negotiations with street vendor unions took longer than in Orizaba, but they led to the change of the permanent street markets of the city centre, converting them into temporary ones. In this issue, CANAZAC, the local CANACINTRA, and the municipality were able to generate convergence over policy because the city centre was being renovated. In 1993 it was included in the UNESCO World Heritage catalogue and, traditionally, municipal governments had encountered problems to maintain some pedestrian areas free of vendors. As a by-product of this collaboration, CANAZAC proposed a comprehensive strategic plan

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<sup>188</sup> Kuri – Rosado, S. Personal interview. Orizaba. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2001.

<sup>189</sup> Velasco –Pagaza, M. Personal interview. Orizaba. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>190</sup> Ponce, D. (1999). “Rogelio Sanmiguel: a falta de Empleo toleran autoridades municipales el comercio ambulante”. *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 9<sup>th</sup> November.



for the city centre based on the existing participatory devices, greater quality in public services, and more rational governmental spending<sup>191</sup>.

CANAZAC and CANACINTRA are members of an acquisitions committee, which is responsible for about five percent of all governmental spending in the state. The collaboration in this area has not been as successful as in commerce, for the state government has proposed a tax for industries and businesses of about two per cent of their gross income. The problem is not the tax per se, which would be used to grant low interest loans to businesses, but the proposed administrator of the fund. While the governor wants the state government to administer it, the chambers want a collegiate direction<sup>192</sup>. Despite this, collaboration between chambers and government is relatively constant. Like in León, the PRD administration has established a programme to finance soft credits to starting businesses<sup>193</sup>, which granted loans to 80 small businesses in the 1998-2001 period. By the last year of the administration, 14 per cent of the credits had been repaid (Cabrero-Mendoza et al., 2001).

The experience of trade and industrial chambers in the three cases suggests that convergence is relatively easy to reach when three conditions arise: a) governmental lack of resources, b) the private actor's willingness to perform activities that are usually exclusive of government, and c) certain degree of agreement on operational issues. When collaboration in joint programmes takes place, both municipal officials and chamber presidents interpret it as an expression of complementary policies.

Interviewed CANACO and CANACINTRA officials argue that the obtained

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<sup>191</sup> Dávila del Real, E. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>192</sup> Ruíz – Ramírez, M. Personal interview. Zacatecas. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.

<sup>193</sup> Casas, J. (1999). "Entrega Ayuntamiento Recursos para crear 8 microempresas". *El Sol de Zacatecas*, 10th November.

benefits are greater than the costs, especially in terms of saved time. Bureaucracy, they argue, is not as efficient as private sector companies. Municipal officials, on the other hand, do not usually oppose collaborative programmes as long as regulations are followed and a high level of supervision can be guaranteed.

## Conclusions

The three case studies show high levels of interdependence between the most important non-governmental local actors and the municipality. The scarcity of resources and the political pre-eminence of local governments have been instrumental in the construction of shared public-private policies and programmes, as Cole and John (2001) argue about European cities. The municipal government continues to be the centre of the local political life and, as such, it can use its status to establish joint collaborative links with private actors, obtain benefits, and validate them as the result of subsidiary action. The activity of self-organised actors, on the other hand, does not appear to weaken or undermine this governmental pre-eminence. The three cases display patterns of governance, in the sense that the pooling of resources between governmental and non-governmental actors in order to implement and design policies is greater than in the past. Having said that, it is important to note that this combination of resources does not take place in all policy sectors but, mainly, in those where the different actors' interests concur.

In the three case studies, the policy areas where public and private actors coincide are mostly related to the enforcement of commercial regulations and the implementation of joint programmes that benefit chamber members. In a minor degree, social NGOs



have also been able to influence policy and collaborate with municipalities in situations of crisis or in very narrow policy sectors. The social NGOs performance in the three municipalities points at the importance of the considered policy issue to enable public-private interdependence to become co-operation. This, however, is coloured according to general partisan approaches in government. Differently from what Hernández-Vicencio (2000) found in Chihuahua and Baja California, the PANista government of León developed, basically, the same joint programmes as Orizaba and Zacatecas and, therefore, it cannot be proved that PAN governments cultivate closer relations with commercial and industrial chambers than PRI and PRD ones (at least among the case studies). The partisan element, however, appears to be more evident in the linkages established with the social NGOs. In this area, the relations established by the PRD administration of Zacatecas with Alianza Cívica, and the prolonged negotiations with the street vendors' association suggest a greater disposition to become involved with autonomous social NGOs than León, where the main exchanges with the non-governmental sector are maintained through its complex participatory system, described in the previous chapter, and the abovementioned charities taking care of persons with disabilities.

## Conclusions

### Governance understandings reconsidered

As it was explained in the introduction, this dissertation's research was guided by three main questions: a) what are the founding conceptual and empirical assumptions of contemporary debates about governance?, b) what do contemporary modes and patterns of local governance in Mexico look like?, c) how useful are the resulting governance frameworks for understanding modes and patterns of governance in Mexico and how valid are they when applied to the Mexican political system? Chapter one addressed the first question focusing on governance understandings that are theoretical frameworks, i.e. that consider governance as an analytical tool, instrumental to explain government-society interactions. As a consequence, in chapter one I propose a group of commonalities present in the analysed governance understandings that formed the dissertation's theoretical framework. Having this framework in mind, chapters three, four, and five dealt with the second research question, trying to identify patterns of local governance in the three case studies. Finally, the respective chapters' conclusions, and these general conclusions, address the third research question on the usefulness of governance understandings to explain the changes analysed in the three selected municipalities.

This final section of the dissertation, taking in consideration the findings of the previous chapters, argues that the basic theoretical propositions of governance understandings (especially in the national and sub-national level of analysis) constitute an adequate and useful framework to analyse the patterns of government-society interactions found in the three selected cases. This is possible not only for the



actual theoretical contents of the analysed frameworks (i.e. the definition of governance as a policy-making paradigm based on individuals' networks -John, 2001, and the resulting increased levels of fragmentation, blurredness, and self-organisation) but also because the recent contributions to governance literature have emphasised the importance of national and local contexts as shaping forces of governance patterns. In this way, governance understandings can be used to analyse the Mexican political system and make a contribution towards the theoretical organisation of the increasing number of empirical studies on Mexican local governments.

*Governance as an organising framework*

Mexican literature on local governments has increasingly dealt with some of the most important themes of governance understandings, such as the transformation of the traditional roles of government and society, the implications of having more fragmented bureaucracies, and the dispersal of power that has been caused in some policy areas by the introduction of citizens' networks. In the last decade, the contributions made by E. Cabrero-Mendoza, V. Espinoza-Valle, R. García Del Castillo, T. Guillén-López, and A. Ziccardi have been instrumental in the development of a relevant corpus of studies on Mexican municipalities which, in its turn, has increased the general interest over these matters. Nevertheless, these contributions to the academic literature have been mostly empirical, focusing on the development of case studies and management diagnostics that pay attention to the rapid changes taking place in some municipalities, and their implications on democracy and the traditional role of governments.

Unlike the ‘Anglo-governance’ school, Mexican academia lacks a wide theoretical organising framework to deal with the multiple implications of the increased participation of non-governmental actors in policy-making and implementation. It is enough to look at contributions such as Cabrero-Mendoza et al. (2001) to notice the absence of broad and far reaching theoretical tools linking the different approaches and contents present in the wealth of empirical data. The basic governance propositions, as described in chapter one, can be instrumental in the establishment of common theoretical linkages among local government studies, as it was the case in this dissertation.

The empirical data collected in this research was analysed following the abovementioned theoretical framework. Its four basic propositions, as it can be remembered, are:

1. *Government and governance are not a dichotomy.* Confirming the basic argument of John (2001), Krahmann (2003) and Pierre and Peters (2000), Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas can not be classified as either cases of government or governance. The patterns described in the previous chapters show that given the increased fragmentation of policy sectors, and their corresponding dealings with society, is necessary to develop detailed accounts of governance differentiating by concrete policy areas, administrative periods, and political orientation of the City Council (among other variables). In the three case studies there are policy areas, like the internal administrative services, sanitation, local economic development, and public security, where citizens’ networks have not been incorporated in a substantial way to policy-making



processes. In this way, the three cases display patterns of strong mayors, employing traditional hierarchical command in some areas, coexisting with policy sectors where networks have been incorporated as an ordinary procedure of policy design. Orizaba, León, and Zacatecas are a mixture of both government and governance in different degrees, as it is explained below. This is not only pertinent to the municipalities as a whole, but also to the concrete policy sectors in which there are dynamisms of governance. In the three cases, direct exchanges with citizens circumventing autonomous social representatives, NCs, CPWs, citizens' councils, and joint programmes with commercial and industrial chambers coexist with strong mayors, and influential City Councils and departmental directors. Pierre and Peters (2000) had already pointed out that, given that hierarchical government has not been replaced by policy-making through networks, all polities are hybrids of both government and governance practices; to what degree this is so in particular cases must be determined by empirical research.

2. *In this dissertation, government and governance are considered as paradigms of policy-making and implementation.* In order to simplify the treatment of the conceptual difference between government and governance, this dissertation used the definition of John (2001), which understands governance as a 'flexible policy-making paradigm based on networks'. In this way, it is easier to explain the coexistence of government and governance in the same municipalities or policy sectors; as Pierre and Peters (2000) argue, the government-governance mixture can be considered as a policy continuum. The shift to governance, however, implies the use of governmental instruments and mechanisms of

interaction with society that are “qualitatively different from what went on before” (John, 2001: 168). The studied municipalities show different degrees of the shift to governance. León is the case study that appears to be implementing governance mechanisms in a greater number of policy areas. This municipality has fragmented its bureaucracy (and its dealings with citizens) more than the other two, increasing significantly the number of semi-autonomous agencies and public-private planning bodies. It has the most complex participatory system, with a greater number of NCs, CPWs and CCs working in more policy areas than Orizaba and Zacatecas. Orizaba has reduced the capacity of NCs and CPWs to participate with their contributions in public services’ funding, and its only CC is appointed, which means that it has limited autonomy. Zacatecas is in a similar situation to Orizaba, with the significant difference that, for a year, its public-private CC had binding powers over the City Council. Nevertheless, the bureaucratic structure of these two municipalities remains more compact and subordinated to the mayor. In this way, León has experienced a greater shift towards governance than Orizaba and Zacatecas. In order to determine the exact extent to which this change has occurred, it is necessary to develop more sensitive indicators and elaborate more on the conceptual distinction between government and governance, as Krahmann (2003) suggests.

3. *Governance is characterised by increased fragmentation, blurredness, and self-organisation.*

The introduction of networks in policy-making in the case studies has generated different patterns of government-society interactions. León, Orizaba, and Zacatecas have more governmental institutions than in the past;



a fact that, especially in León, has increased fragmentation and the dispersal of decision-making loci. As a result of the introduction of participatory devices, the use of horizontal networks has increased. Innovative approaches, like the pooling of resources with direct beneficiaries of public services, have been introduced as a complement to traditional public service provision. Mayoral leadership plays a more prominent role than in the past to limit the duplicity of functions and the policy-incoherence resulting from governmental fragmentation and the incorporation of more non-governmental actors into policy-making. Overall, the three municipalities display the characteristics argued by John (2001) and Krahmann (2003) (see tables three, four and five) and therefore, have developed dynamisms of governance in different degrees. In order to simplify, I proposed that governance is characterised by greater governmental fragmentation, blurredness between the public and private spheres, and self-organisation among non-governmental actors. Chapters three, four, and five dealt with these attributes of governance.

4. *Contexts shape local governance.* These attributes, however, are not present in all policy sectors in the same way, but are shaped by the national and local contexts (Cole and John, 2001; Le Gales, 2002). This theoretical proposition is especially important given that early governance understandings proposed specific patterns or means of interaction as the defining attribute of governance. Rosenau and Czempiel (1992), for example, defined governance as the behaviour convergence among autonomous actors achieved in an environment where full governmental capacities were absent. More

significantly, the influential model of Rhodes (1995, 1997) argues that governance is characterised by the management of inter-organizational networks, which can override the states' capacities if become autonomous enough. Following the same line of argument of Cole and John (2001) and John (2001), this dissertation proposes that in spite of the dynamisms of governance present in the three case studies, there is not evidence of the formation of inter-organizational networks capable of making local government ineffective. As the evidence discussed in chapter four shows, important inter-organizational networks can still be influenced by local officials even when they cannot be controlled completely by them.

These basic theoretical propositions constitute a useful framework to organise both the findings of Mexican literature and the empirical evidence. Overall, it allows producing differentiated accounts of local governance sensitive to national and local contexts, and to the way they shape governance patterns.

#### *The importance of contexts*

The shift from government to governance in the three case studies has occurred in a patchy way, advancing in some policy sectors and not being present in others. Thus, Mexican local governments, as represented by these three urban municipalities governed by different political parties, have indeed experienced a move towards the ordinary use of citizens' networks in policy-making, but in a partial way. The shift to governance in Mexico has not been comprehensive, nor has it followed a linear change that could suggest a transition. On the contrary, as the case of Orizaba



indicates, the power of citizens' networks over policy is reversible, as long as local officials are able to change the established procedures for their interaction with government.

The differences in governance patterns of the three cases, and the diverse speeds and directions of change, can be explained by a set of variables that belong to the national and local contexts. Table 21a is a summary of the findings of chapter two, which analyses the national context conditions. Basically, the studied municipalities have shifted to governance because the complexity of the urban problems they have to address, the political alternation in City Councils, and the requirements of the LFC. In order to be able to qualify to branch 33 transfers, the three municipalities have implemented participatory mechanisms. They, however, are shaped by the particular needs of the municipalities. León, having the highest need in basic urban infrastructure, has the largest NCs and CPWs system, asking neighbours to pay up to 50 per cent of the cost of public works. Orizaba and Zacatecas, being less deficient in basic urbanisation services, have used their NCs and CPWs mostly to supervise public works and obtain information in order to legitimise policy. Finally, alternation has played a role, for the first PANista administration of Orizaba introduced the León model as the result of networking with other PANista municipalities. Zacatecas did the same, receiving advising from the state PRD government. Finally, León generated its participatory model in the early 1990s, during its first opposition administration.

**Table 21a. Variables found to be useful to explain differences of governance patterns in the case studies (national context)**

Variable	Observations
Urban problems under the control of municipal agencies	After the 1983 constitutional amendment, municipalities have been forced to address urban problems relying more on their own resources. The increasing complexity of these problems have reduced the subordination of local policy to state and national politics, introducing approaches based on technical expertise and the pooling of resources with citizens. The case studies show a varying level of need in their urban problems and different approaches to solve them.
Political alternation in sub-national governments	Partisan alternation, consolidated in the mid 1990s, has introduced rotation among local officials, but also alternative government projects and ground-breaking approaches to local problems. The most relevant innovations in citizens' participation were brought in by opposition administrations and have been shared by same-party municipalities using horizontal networking.
Federal policies on requirements to receive transfers	After 1997, the LFC requires municipalities to conduct consultations among citizens to qualify for federal transfers. This has promoted the establishment of participatory mechanisms as NCs, CPW's, and citizens' councils. The studied municipalities differ in the degree in which these citizens' bodies have a say over budgets and public works' priorities.

Source: own elaboration.

Among the local variables, the political party in office, the policy area, the policy issue, the looseness of networks, and the procedures established for their functioning are especially important to explain differences in governance patterns (see table 21b).

The political party in office determines governance patterns in a relative way, by comparing the possible gains of opening up policy communities to citizens' participation with the performance of other parties' administrations. The model of León, for example, was explicitly designed to develop a partisan differential with previous PRI governments. Orizaba did the same during the PANista administrations of the 1990s, but the participatory mechanism was changed by the "New PRI" government. Finally, the first opposition government in Zacatecas introduced NCs and CPW's. Policy area is also important. As it was mentioned before, the three municipalities have introduced citizens' networks in policy areas that have a high legitimising potential or in great need of complementary resources.



It is interesting to note that the three cases have maintained, in general, monetary matters under the direct control and supervision of the City Council. Even in the cases of the budgetary capabilities of the COPLADEM of León and the CODEMUN of Zacatecas, they are exercised within very strictly defined limits. The most innovative case of shift to governance in this area is the granting of binding powers to the CODEMUN of Zacatecas, for although the actual share of the municipal budget over which this council has decision powers is small, it has changed the usual line of command.

In the same way, policy issues are important to open up policy-making to autonomous non-governmental networks. The application of commerce regulations, for example, has proved to be an important issue over which commercial and industrial chambers have agreed with local governments, establishing shared policies and programmes. On the other hand, public security is a policy sector that generates more conflict between public and private actors. Finally, how compact policy networks are and how they participate in policy-making are important to determine membership and decision power. Procedures to be elected, or appointed, to a citizens' council, for example, determines its advisory or deliberative character and thus, its level of influence.

As a general conclusion, it can be said that the shift to governance taking place in the three cases is not a comprehensive change, nor has it occurred in a linear way. The abovementioned variables can help to explain the differences among these cases.

**Table 21b. Variables found to be useful to explain differences of governance patterns in the case studies (local contexts)**

Variable	Observations
Political party in office	The general political orientation of the party in office, compared with other party's previous administrations, introduced new actors in the policy-making processes. The different parties' approach to city problems has been also important in shaping management policies, including NPM and agency fragmentation, the attitude towards social NGOs and commercial or industrial chambers, and in the different styles of mayoral leadership. The three case studies show differences in these areas.
Policy area	Policy-making or implementation based on citizens' networks has not been introduced in all policy areas, but mainly in basic urbanisation services and in other sectors with high legitimising potential or in need of citizens' resources. The case studies display slight variations in the areas open to citizens' networks.
Policy issues	Policy-issues have been important to establish networks of collaboration between municipal governments and autonomous non-governmental actors. When the issue is considered of public interest, it receives support from social NGOs. The policy-issue has been instrumental to establish joint programmes and policies between municipalities and the commercial and industrial chambers.
Looseness of networks	The openness of a policy-network or community is used by the respective City Council to determine the level of citizens' networks influence or degree of responsibility.
Procedures established for the interaction between local officials and citizens' networks	The case studies show different degrees of formalisation of interactions of networks formed by citizens and local officials. Procedures are used by City Council members, and the municipal staff, to influence decisions taken in citizens' participatory bodies.

Source: own elaboration.

*Further research agenda*

The evidence collected in this dissertation suggests several research lines that, given its limited scope and dimension, could not be addressed. They are mostly related to the use of a more appropriate theoretical model to describe partial shifts to governance, the transformation of the mayoral pre-eminence, the legacies of corporatism and clientelism now that the PRI is no longer in power, the possible problems of accountability related to citizens' networks, and the internal dynamisms that explain citizens' bodies influence, among others.



1. *Alternative theoretical models to describe partial and differentiated shifts to governance.*

Governance understandings have been useful to analyse the Mexican case. However, the model of the 'shift from government to governance', being usually articulated in a general way, does not seem to include the possibility of partial and uneven shifts of policy-making paradigms. Moreover, the current use of the idea of a 'shift' does not rule out the presupposition of a direction of change, and thus, the idea of transition. In order to avoid possible normative presuppositions that consider government as the departure point and governance as the aim of change, it is necessary to use other kind of metaphors. The image of the overlapping areas of influence could be useful, for it acknowledges that governance is not a matter of a change that excludes government but, rather, that regardless of the scale of the shift, government and governance paradigms can be simultaneously working in the same policy areas. Local governance literature would benefit by the development of these new metaphors that could, in turn, stimulate the rethinking of the conceptual difference between government and governance in polities where individuals' networks are used only in some policy sectors.

2. *The transformation of mayoral pre-eminence.* This research has confirmed the pre-eminent place that the mayor has in Mexican local politics and in policy-networks. However, the need for the development of leadership styles based on a greater exposure to municipal staff and the general public suggests that this pre-eminence is maintained at a higher cost than in the times when the PRI was in power. Governance understandings suggest that the governmental place of importance is sustained by the use of more resources

of all kinds. A specific research could address the problem, comparing traditional roles of the mayor with the emergent ones.

3. *The legacies of corporatism and clientelism.* Most interviewees gave evidence to support the idea that the *Citizens' Day* programme, NCs, CPWs, CCs, and even shared policies with local chambers were possible because a previous history of participation in unions and clientelistic networks. It seems that neighbourhood committees operate because there is a tradition on co-optation by local authorities, and citizens expect that their active involvement to make petitions to authorities is a requirement to gain access to public services. More research is needed to demonstrate a causal link between previous experiences in corporatism and clientelism, and participation in NCs and bodies as such. This research would need to establish, in detail, the traditional patterns of clientelistic and corporatist interactions, and compare them with the existing ones in current participatory mechanisms.
4. *The possible problems of accountability.* More research is needed in order to determine the actual level of supervision carried out by the City Councils and the respective local congress over concrete participatory mechanisms. It is necessary to research the usefulness of current regulations, the intensity of contacts between members of CCs and City Councils, and the possible tensions arising as a consequence.
5. *The level of actual influence of CCs over policy.* This dissertation used aggregated data, newspapers, official reports, and interviews to trace the influence of



citizens' bodies over policy-making. Nevertheless, it is necessary to conduct long periods of participant observation, and maintain detailed records about citizens' proposals and the actual policy results in order to clarify this process. This could be important to learn the internal dynamisms that explain citizens' influence in conditions of governance.

## Methodological appendix

The intention of this appendix on methodological issues is to discuss briefly the criteria used in the selection of the general research approach and the interviewees, and point at some problems in information gathering that emerged during the fieldwork. These brief considerations could be useful for the assessment of the dissertation's scope and its implications on governance understandings.

### Qualitative Research

As it was mentioned in the introduction and general conclusions, the main objective of the research is to establish how useful is the analysed corpus of literature to understand emergent governance trends in the three studied municipalities. It seeks to make a contribution to the differentiated accounts on local governance that emphasise local and national contexts as explanatory factors for the variation in governance patterns. The general structure of the dissertation follows the usual sequence of theory, presentation of empirical evidence, and theory revisited. This comparison, nevertheless, was to be based on variables that cannot be easily measured. Chapters three, four, and five, made use of hard data to support their respective arguments. Fragmentation was measured by the number of governmental agencies, especially the semi-autonomous ones, and the number of interviews or public audiences granted by local officials. Blurredness was approached by making cross-references to the number of NCs, CPWs, and citizens' councils, their legal capabilities, and the municipal or federal funds used in the implementation of their decisions or directly managed by them. Finally, self-organisation used the relative



weight in the local economies of the respective economic activities represented by the commercial and industrial chambers.

Nevertheless, given that the figures employed in this thesis indicated only general interaction patterns, it became apparent at the beginning of the research that the use of other sources was also necessary, like secondary literature, including local newspapers, and, decisively, the interview of local elites. As a result, I decided to approach the problem of local governance in the three case studies using qualitative methods. Making a comparison between governance theoretical understandings and the Mexican municipalities required detailed descriptions on how interrelations take place. Full descriptions, in their turn, necessitated in-depth interviews to obtain information that is not normally reachable through structured surveys or published official reports (Cf. Ruiz–Olabuénaga and Ispizua, 1989). The research results presented in this thesis are the product of the combination of these different sources of information although, in general, the hard data were considered the standard against which interviewees' opinions were compared.

The main qualitative tools of analysis used in the collected information were those of *grounded theory*. Both relevant documents (mainly municipal reports) and interview transcripts or notes were treated as texts. The interviews that were considered especially important were recorded in audiotape (15 out of 40 interviews and personal communications) and full transcripts were produced. Once transcripts and notes were ready, a first review of the texts was conducted. The first survey of the information catalogued it in four main analytical categories, which followed the general order of the questions: a) differences in governing styles according to political

party, b) governmental policies aimed at fragmenting bureaucratic structures or procedures, c) examples of semi-corporatist or clientelistic practices, and d) examples of public-private collaboration that do not compromise the non-governmental actor's autonomy. A second analysis organised the texts in a more detailed way, in three classifications that became the basis of the empirical chapters: a) fragmentation policies in government, b) blurredness in participation devices and c) collaboration over shared policies. These categories were additionally subdivided according to the case to which accounts were applied (León, Orizaba, Zacatecas, the corresponding state, or the general conditions of the Mexican political system). In the end, despite my initial scepticism about the value of the partisan factor in government, it was maintained as a means to explain governance differences in the three cases, albeit in the relative way explained in the previous chapters.

The objective of grounded theory techniques is to identify patterns among analytical categories and elaborate provisional explanations, which can be tested subsequently (Bernard et al., 1985). In the case of this dissertation, I considered patterns of governance as the dependent variable, while the political party in office, the structure of local governments, the policy sectors in which networks operate, their degree of looseness, and the procedures established for their functioning were treated as independent variables. The general argument, as it was explained in both the general introduction and conclusions, is based on this relationship that is indicated by the collected evidence. Further research, however, is needed to quantitatively measure the argued linkage between dependent and independent variables. Having said this, it is important to note that I was not attempting to develop a theoretical model to explain Mexican local governance as a whole, but only to propose explanations for



the variations present in the case studies and suggest hypotheses to be researched in the future in other Mexican regions. Mexican rural municipalities, for example, display governance patterns that could show that the results of this research are inadequate for their cases.

### *Documental analysis*

Most of the documental sources were primary: annual reports of the municipalities and commerce or industrial chambers, documents for internal circulation, policy-papers, and the official reports from federal agencies dealing with transfers to municipalities. The case studies presented by Cabrero–Mendoza (1996, 1998 and others); Conde–Bonfil (1998); Guillén–López (1996, 1998), Rodríguez and Ward (1991); Ward (1998, 1998a); Ziccardi (1995); and Ziccardi and Saltalamacchia (1997) were used to complement information provided by the respondents when it was necessary. These contributions were also considered as an initial reading list to search for academic studies on the three municipalities. León has been the most studied municipality of the three cases, with at least four substantial contributions analysing its participation system, and the NPM policies implemented during the PANista administrations (Bazdresch-Parada, 2002; Cabrero-Mendoza, 1999b; Negrete, 2002; and Santos-Zavala, 1999). By comparison, Orizaba and Zacatecas are practically absent from the academic literature. The second PANista administration in Orizaba has a research report on its management improvements (Velázquez-García, 1999), and Zacatecas has another focusing on the reforms of the law of citizens' participation that took place in the last four years (Guerrero and Gryj, 2004). This is explained, in part, by the municipalities' scales of influence. León has a national

reputation, while Orizaba and Zacatecas are important at regional level. More significantly, most of the publications dealing with León have been originated in the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), which has a prestigious research centre of local governments that publishes a considerable amount of research papers and books per year. Orizaba and Zacatecas, on the other hand, have not been systematically studied by regional research centres which, in any case, usually have lower publishing rates than centres in Mexico City.

The case studies keep records that, in general, are regarded as reliable by interviewees. Nevertheless, they tend to be fragmentary and inconsistent if compared with federal aggregates. This was especially problematic in the tables of chapter four dealing with amounts of transfers administered by CPW's. Most of the figures shown are reconstructions based on other sources, indicated in the respective table. INAFED (2002 and 2003a) and INEGI (2002) were particularly difficult, for most of their reported amounts appear to be provisional, despite that the WebPages do not state that explicitly. This is explained by the time-gap between the approval of the municipalities' expenses reports by the local congresses, and the reception of the official information in the central office of INEGI. This office does not receive financial reports from municipalities directly, but through *ad hoc* information exchange agreements with the different states. If the information has been already released by the local congress (that is, if the annual expenditure reports have been approved and no mismanagement has been found) then the requested information is given to INEGI. If that is not the case, INEGI has to apply for it to the local



congress, and then only general aggregates are released<sup>194</sup>. As a result, it is usual that the financial information is published by INEGI with a two or three year delay. Thus, tables in the dissertation are updated until 2002.

In the case of newspapers, it was possible to make a systematic search in the three cases for information corroborating or questioning the information received in interviews. However, Orizaba is the only city with a Web Page with a search engine that brings together most local newspapers' articles. In the cases of León and Zacatecas, it was necessary to make a manual search in the national newspaper archives (*Hemeroteca Nacional*). In practice, most of the relevant information, especially on amounts spent in public services, was published in the previous months to local elections, during the initial or final weeks of the administrations and in the months in which the particular mayor presented his annual report to the City Council.

### *Elite interviewing*

The selection of interviewees followed the criteria set out in Stedward (1997) and Babbie (1992), trying to obtain interviews with persons with a privileged position because their appointments in government or NGOs and their access to information. In most cases, interviewing them was the only means to obtain information that in the official reports was inconsistent or absent. In this way, technical staff was preferred as source of information related to procedural or financial matters, while politicians were questioned on policy priorities. When it was necessary to obtain information on more than one municipality, state and federal actors were chosen. All

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<sup>194</sup> Padilla – Tejeda, M. del C. Personal communication. 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002.

respondents were offered the opportunity of confidentiality and/or anonymity in the report of the research results, which was declined in all cases. I also asked their explicit authorisation to quote them. It appears that the fact that the PhD researcher belonged to a foreign university was instrumental in securing access to them. Regarding the translations of the interview quotations, they were made in the simplest terms. In the case of problematic words or expressions, the original Spanish term is provided between brackets [ ]. Finally, as Bernard et al. (1985) argue, interviews are an accurate tool if the objective is to know states of mind, but not so for “external behaviour”. In order to go around the problem of accuracy of informants, it was usual to make cross-references between interviewees and published records. Discrepancies were annotated in the corresponding table or chapter. In this way, any possible problems with the research validity and reliability are within acceptable limits for qualitative research (Yin, 1994). Table 22 is a list of interviewees with their corresponding posts and dates in which interviews were conducted:

**Table 22. List of interviewees and their appointments**

No.	Name	Position	Date of interview
1	Alvarado–Morales, Jesús.	Director of the Department of Social Development in the Municipality of Orizaba (2000-2004). Orizaba.	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2001
2	Amezcuca, Héctor.	Professor. Department of Sociology, University of Veracruz [Universidad Veracruzana]. Xalapa.	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
3	Barragán–Montoya, Francisco.	Department director of the State Centre for Municipal Development [Centro Estatal de Desarrollo	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.



		Municipal]. Zacatecas.	
4	Bassols, Mario.	Professor. Metropolitan Autonomous University [Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana] Mexico City.	February, 1999.
5	Briseño, Francisco.	PAN local deputy (2001–2003), former director of the Department of Social Development in the Orizaba Municipality (1998–2000), former trustee (1995–1997). Orizaba.	25 <sup>th</sup> August and 4 <sup>th</sup> September 1998; and 12 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2001.
6	Cadó, Yolanda.	Journalist of <i>El Mundo de Orizaba</i> . Orizaba.	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2001.
7	Conde, Luis E.	Official of the Department of Social Development in the Municipality of León (2000–2003). León.	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2002.
8	Cruz –Arellano, Ezequiel.	President of the Municipal Branch of the PRI in Orizaba. Orizaba.	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2001.
9	Cuahua, Juan.	President of Section 2,376 of the PRI. Orizaba.	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2002.
10	Dávila del Real, Enrique.	President of the National Chamber of Commerce in Zacatecas (CANAZAC) [Cámara Nacional de Comercio Delegación Zacatecas]; PRI pre-candidate for mayor. Zacatecas.	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
11	Dujowich, Susana.	Journalist and TV presenter. Orizaba.	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2001.
12	Escudero – Stadelmann, Ángel.	Former mayor of Orizaba (1998–2000). Orizaba.	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2001.
13	Espinoza de los Monteros, Irma.	Chief of Block, President of the NC at the CANACINTRA–Ojo de Agua neighbourhood, member of the CODEMUN. Orizaba.	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2001, and 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2003.
14	Goytia–Robles, Pedro.	Mayor of Zacatecas (1998–2001 administration). Zacatecas.	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
15	Guerrero, Horacio.	General Director, Institute of Municipal Planning of León (IMPLAN) [Instituto Municipal de Planeación]. León.	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
16	Herrera, Gonzalo.	Department of Organisation, State	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2003.

		Committee of the National Action Party (PAN) (Personal communication). Xalapa.	
17	Juárez–Alfaro, María del Consuelo.	PRD alderwoman, former member of the CODEMUN (1998–2001). Zacatecas.	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2002.
18	Kuri–Rosado, Sergio.	President of the National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Tourism, Orizaba’s local office (CANACO–SERVYTUR) [Cámara Nacional de Comercio y Servicios Turísticos] Orizaba.	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2001.
19	Medina–Lizalde, José Luis.	President of the State Executive Committee of the PRD. Zacatecas.	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
20	Morales–Falcón, Pablo.	Director of the Department of Public Relations in the municipality of Orizaba (2001–2004). Orizaba.	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2003.
21	Muñoz–López, Adriana.	Director of the department of Citizens’ Service [Atención Ciudadana] in the Municipality of León (2000–2003) León.	19 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
22	Navarro–Bañuelos, Eladio.	Director of the State Commission of Human Rights (CEDHZAC) [Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Zacatecas] Zacatecas.	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
23	Ortíz, Oscar.	Director, Directorate of Social Management. Department of Social Management and Citizens’ Participation [Dirección de Gestión Social y Participación Ciudadana]. Municipality of Zacatecas (2001–2004) Zacatecas.	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2002, and 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2003 (the latter via telephone).
24	Osegueda–Cruz, Alfonso.	Director of the “Heriberto Jara” Centre for Municipal Services [Centro de Servicios Municipales Heriberto Jara A.C.] CESEM – VER). Xalapa.	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
25	Padilla–Tejeda, María del Carmen.	Customer services. Municipal System of Databases [Sistema	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2002.



		Municipal de Bases de Datos] (SIMBAD). National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics [Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática] (INEGI) (Personal communication). Aguascalientes.	
26	Pérez–Franco, Aminadab.	President of the Adolfo Christlieb Ibarrola Association. Mexico City.	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2005.
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29	Ruiz–Ramírez, Miguel.	President of the National Chamber of the Industry of Transformation, Zacatecas branch [Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación] (CANACINTRA). Zacatecas.	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
30	Sáenz–Guraieb, Gerardo.	President of the Civic Association for the Integral Development of the Córdoba–Orizaba Region [Desarrollo Integral de la Región Córdoba–Orizaba, A.C.] (DIRCO). Orizaba.	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2001.
31	Torres, Jesús.	Roman Catholic priest. Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Pastoral vicar for the Diocese of Orizaba. Orizaba.	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2001.
32	Trueba–Gracián, Tomás.	Former mayor of Orizaba (1995–1997). Orizaba. NB.	4 <sup>th</sup> September 1998.
33	Vanegas, Eduardo.	Director of Political Studies, State Executive Committee of the PAN [Capacitación; Comité Ejecutivo Estatal del PAN]. Zacatecas.	8 <sup>th</sup> January 2002.

34	Vega–Marín, José Oscar.	Executive director of the Association of Municipalities of Mexico [Asociación de Municipios de México, A.C.] Mexico City.	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2001.
35	Velasco–Pagaza, Mauricio.	President of the National Chamber of the Industry of Transformation, Orizaba branch [Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación] (CANACINTRA). Orizaba.	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2001.

As it can be seen, there are considerably more interviewees from Orizaba than from the other two (15). This is the result of some circumstances of the research. In the first place, the interviews were initiated in that city. For that reason, many of the interviews conducted in January and February 2001 were exploratory, requiring long sessions that sometimes had to be continued in a second or third interview (as in the case of F. Briseño and I. Espinoza de los Monteros). Additionally, this was the city in which I had previously made research for my Master's Degree, which ensured an easy access to other officials that, at the time, were considered relevant. In the end, not all the interviews of that city were important for the argument's design. Nevertheless, they were included for they abound in procedural descriptions. In order to correct the possible bias, I augmented the number of interviewees from state and federal institutions, focusing on patterns common to most municipalities.



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